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A
Story Within a Story



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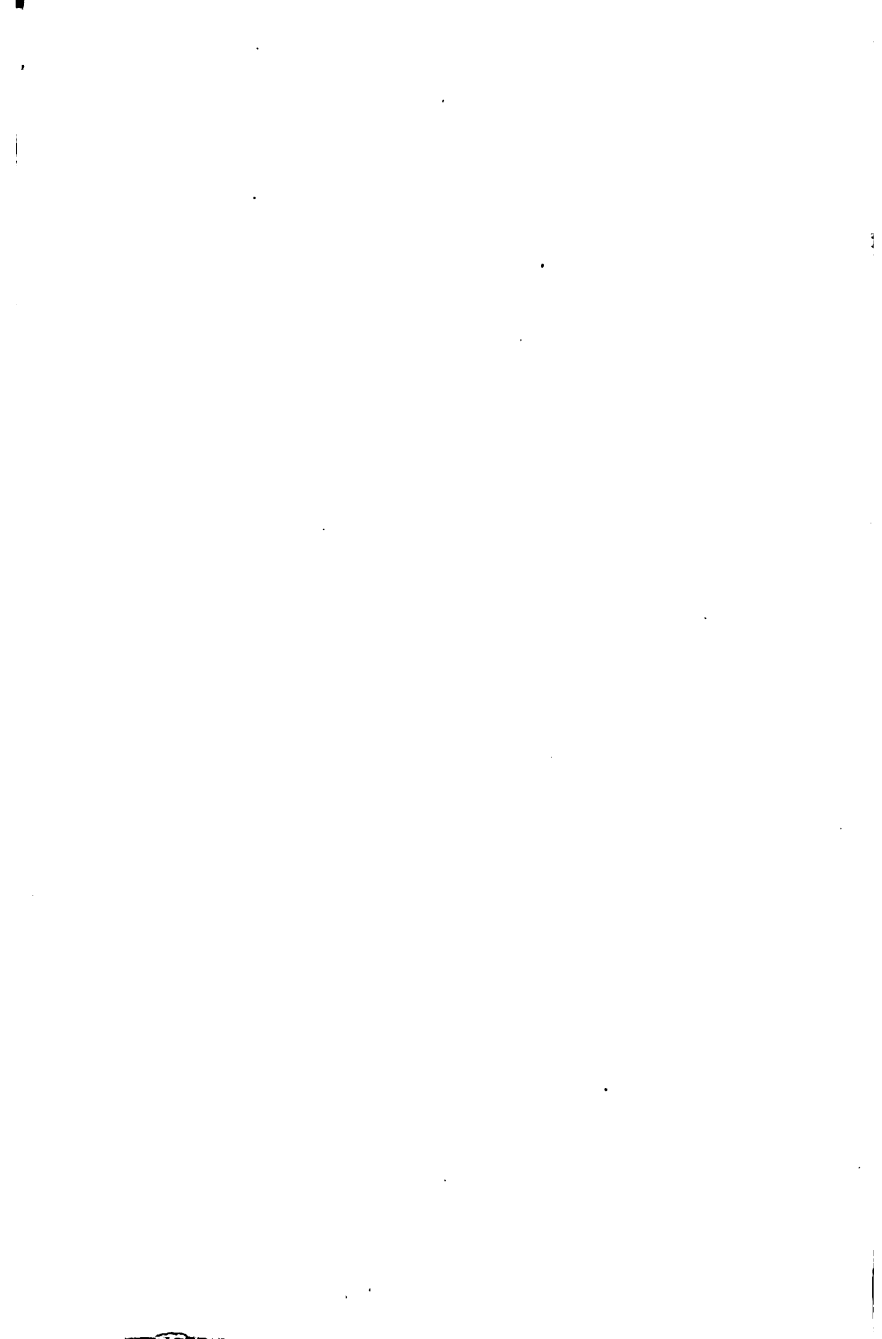


Arthur's compliments.

Washington
D.C.

March, 1903.

A STORY WITHIN A STORY



°
A STORY WITHIN
A STORY

BY

DAWN GRAYE

" Little things
On little wings
Bear little souls to Heaven."

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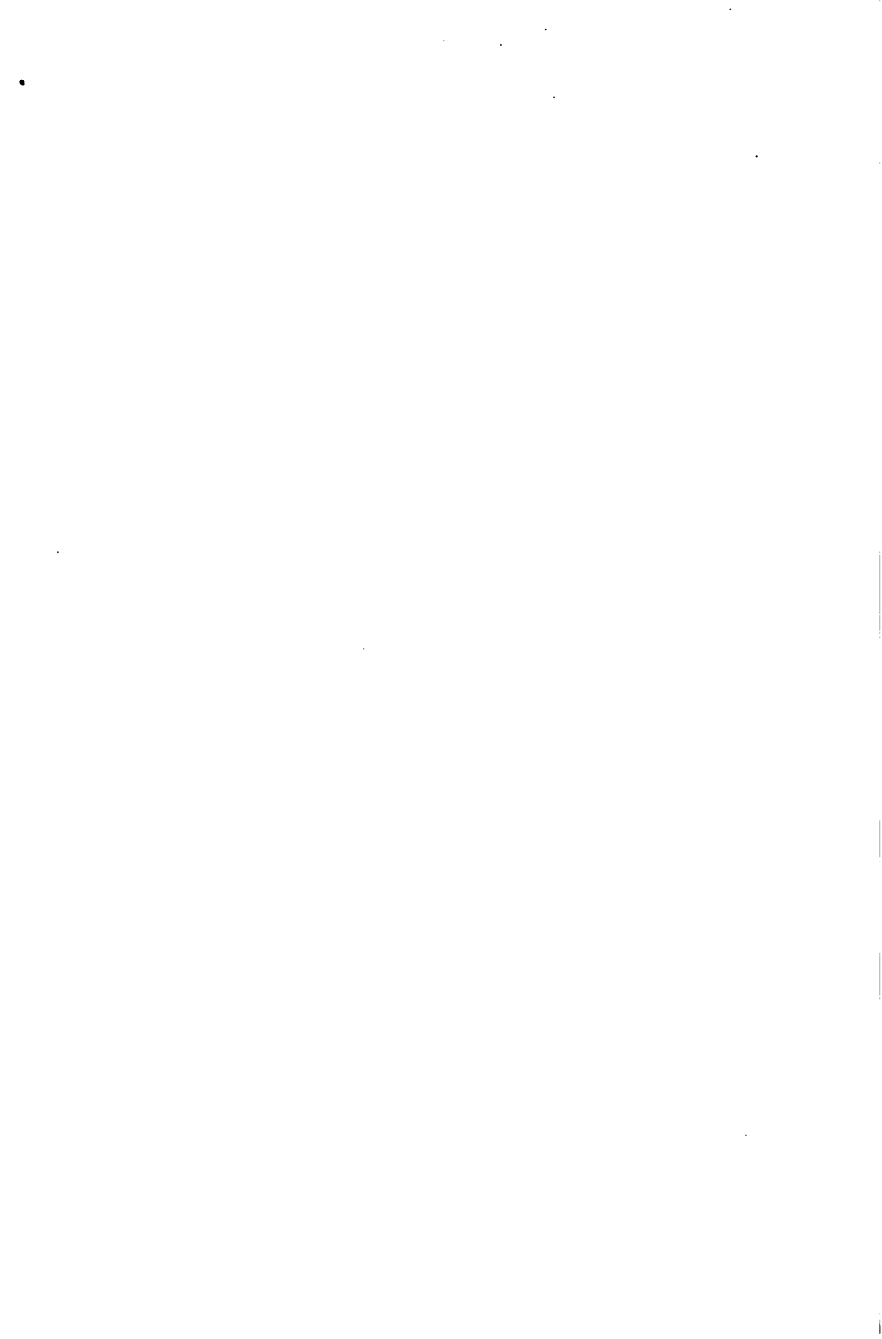
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*Ad Illam quae mihi omnia erat, mater incom-
parabilis, formosissima, semper amata
et semper amari.*



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A STORY WITHIN A STORY

CHAPTER I.

A DROOPING "BUD."

*"And e'en while Fashion's brightest arts decoy,
The heart, distrusting, asks if this be joy."*

"Goodness has its own beauty," a wise French author tells us. "Good women never grow old or ugly." But, since our bodies are simply workaday dresses, to be slipped off when the soul's sweet Sabbath comes, what matter if they be of homespun or finest silk? It is not external beauty that we need seek in our own faces or those of our loved ones." The spirit of that truth was in the pretty compliment paid to Miss Alice yesterday by little Roy, as they walked together. The earth was still damp from the night's heavy rainfall, but every cloud had passed from the blue May sky, and such sharp spears of sunlight pierced through the overhanging lilac branches that Miss Alice raised her hand to shield her eyes.

"The sun seems to love my face this morning," she said at last, smiling.

"I don't wonder," replied Roy; "everybody loves it. It's such a dear face, Miss Alice; I never saw anyone's but mamma's that was so beautiful."

Miss Alice, once indeed a beauty, is a pale, thin-faced woman now, because of sorrow and ill health, looking much older than she is, but at heart a fresh-cheeked child. For the reason, perhaps, that, in her own words, she did not "begin to live really until she was eighteen years old"—her "birthday" falling on a Sunday morning one summer at Cherrydale. It had been the winter before that we first met, quite fifteen years ago—What racers the years are!

Cousin May was organizing her "Sewing Saturdays" for the physical benefit of the poor and the spiritual benefit of her school-girl daughters, and we were busy dispatching invitations to those who would be likely to "come over and help us."

"Send one to Alice Goldweight," said Cousin May.

"Alice Goldweight," exclaimed our "secretary," "O, she would never come, in the world. Her mother, so mine says, is the most frivolous of *nouveaux riches*. They are New York people, spending the winter in Washington.

I don't believe Alice Goldweight knows what charity means, or a poor person looks like close——" after a pause, "that sounds uncharitable in me, though, doesn't it?"

"It does," responded Cousin May; "I met Alice at the Irwins soon after her 'coming out,' and took one of my 'whim fancies' to her. There's a sweet white soul tucked away there, asleep under the silks and satins and superfluous finery in which her mother dresses her. It needs to be called until it wakes. I always pity the daughters of fashionable women. Alice is but a toy in her ambitious mother's hands, and already quite weary of the gay life she is just entering."

The invitation was sent. A score of girls took seats about the long sewing table the following Saturday afternoon. "Fear not, for we are all here," quoted the "secretary," laughing; "everybody we asked to come, except Alice Goldweight, and *she*, I told you, would never come, in the world."

"No; she'd be more likely to come in a chariot with outriders," said Effie Ray (Effie has outgrown her flippancy now).

"Alice promised me she'd come," repeated Cousin May, quietly. A promise to do anything was as good as its being done with May

Wharton, and we noticed that she kept looking expectantly towards the door. At length it opened, and there was Alice. "Dear Mrs. Wharton, I did not mean to be so late," she began: "You said 4 o'clock, and it's quite half past, isn't it?" She drew out her exquisite watch and glanced at it. So did Effie Ray; alas, enviously. But, dear, it chances often that happier hours may be marked for us on an old kitchen clock than on such jeweled time-pieces. "I couldn't help it," she continued, with her gushing little *rire de societe*. "Mamma scolded so when I told I promised to come here instead of going with her to one of those horrid receptions. I'm here, though. I walked over. Mamma wanted the Victoria, and now I'd like to see what a 'Sewing Society' is."

So Cousin May showed and told her many things which in her environment she had never heard or thought of. For in those days Alice was one of those poor daughters of wealth, with a brownstone front between them and all humanity. That she was impressed by her new learning, she proved by coming for several weeks. Then, in her place, came a note, heavy with the ornament of her mother's huge crest and monogram.

"My dear Mrs. Wharton:

"I have caught cold at the Bachelor's dance and I know by the doctor's face, he thinks I'm as dreadfully ill as I feel. Mamma is so disappointed I can't go to the Irwin's affair tonight, but I'm glad I don't have to, I'm so tired. I enjoyed coming to you greatly, and I would like to have finished making that flannel baby shirt, it was so tiny, and cunning, the first real sewing that I ever did. It must be very nice to feel you're doing something useful, I think, but Mamma don't agree with me.

"Affectionately yours,

^ "ALICE GOLDWEIGHT."

Our Father has His own good time to call home to the fold His strayed and stolen lambs—some at the noon hour, some at evening. Cousin May prayed that He would call Alice while it was yet morning.

CHAPTER II.

DR. WINGFIELD'S PRESCRIPTION.

"It often 'appens, my Lady," said Jeems solemnly, "that poor folks do 'ave comforts as the rich never knows the taste of."

"Mrs. Goldweight." The Doctor's steel gray eyes looked sternly over their steel-rimmed glasses. "You ask my candid opinion. I will give it. Your daughter must have a country summer—no Newport or Saratoga or such merry-go-rounds, but a quiet farmhouse in some quiet village, away from her fashionable acquaintances, where she can wear gingham dresses with blouse waists, a 'rough-and-ready' hat, simply trimmed fresh every morning with buttercups and daisies of her own hands' gathering. A summer of freckle-faced 'outdoorism' among plain people, who live naturally, go to bed when they're sleepy, eat when they're hungry, cry when they're sad and laugh when they're happy, and whose characters are rounded by friendly friction one against the other. The 'brook and river' have met and merged too soon in Alice's case. I'd turn back the tide a few years and make her a child again."

"Why, Doctor," interposed Mrs. Goldweight; "you know I always hated children. I brought Alice up to be my friend and companion. Her French governess used to say of her even as a baby that she was a 'perfect little lady.'—and the idea of going into the country. Alice wouldn't listen to such a thing. Give up Newport and the lovely 'hops' every night"—

"Alice cannot dance a step this summer with my permission," replied the Doctor quickly. Lovely 'hops,' indeed. A fashionable girl is nothing but a human grasshopper; only her 'hopping' is limited to no one season, but lasts all through them. She graduates at sixteen, makes her debut, keeps up her drawing, music, French and German, and goes whirling between whiles down the social rapids. No; Alice must lie in a hammock, under green trees, all summer, and rest. I'd even restrict her reading to children's story books; I fell on a capital one the other day at the Children's Hospital that I wasn't ashamed to borrow from its young owner to see how it ended. And it ended so satisfactorily that I bought a half dozen copies to distribute among my other un-grown friends. It's an age of rapid transit, but we don't want all the boys and girls in the world to be men and women. I love **them** too

well in the growing stage, as my mother did before me. Whenever she'd be traveling in her carriage from county to county in Virginia, and had to seek a night's hospitality by the way, she'd instruct the coachman to ask if there were any children in the house. If they told her 'no,' she drove on to some other home where they could answer 'yes.' 'Children's voices,' she used to say, 'speak the gladdest welcome to any place, and you're happier for being under the same roof with them. True mothers, you know, Mrs. Goldweight, think—

"That Heaven's peace, transfigured lies,
In the calm depths of children's eyes."

"Oh, Doctor, you worry me so talking this way," exclaimed Mrs. Goldweight, petulantly. "I looked forward to such a brilliant season for Alice. She has already received two plain 'Mr.' offers—very nice families. But, of course, I wouldn't listen to them. Alice is too young yet to think of marrying anyone but a foreign nobleman."

"Is that the program?" queried the Doctor, grimly. "Foreign noblemen, I understand, are flooding the market now, but if I had a daughter, I'd think the plain 'Mr.' of a true, good

man who loved her for herself, a proud enough title to win her with."

"But the trouble is, Doctor," explained Alice's mother, "She isn't as handsome as she might have been; she's very, very delicate-looking. Her father was, too, and dreadfully plain in his tastes; so fond of books, and little or no money when I married him. Alice is like him in many things. It's a great disappointment to me." She divided one tear in two with her dainty "duchesse" handkerchief. "But foreigners, you know, don't mind anything so long as a girl is rich. And they say that nothing pleases them more than to be talked to in their own language, as Alice can. I saw to that. My father didn't make his money until I was too old to learn; but Alice took the first prize in French and German, and I make her keep them up. But down in the country in a horrid farmhouse—who will there be to admire her, or know how much expense has been put upon her?"

"I have given you my advice," said the Doctor firmly, with a flash of his fine eyes. "As far as I am permitted to see up the road, your daughter's life depends on your following it. 'My duty, at least, is done.'"

"Now, don't be cross with me," cried the frivolous woman, laying a ring-laden hand detainingly on his arm, "I have depended on you ever since she was born. I'll do everything for her that you say—everything. But whereabouts in the horrible country must I take her?"

"Well, you cannot open a paper at this time of year without seeing some charitable body in the country is offering us pure air, mountain scenery, no mosquitoes, fresh milk and vegetables, with cool rooms and shady porches thrown into the bargain. Suppose," with a humorous smile, "I look for you tonight in the evening journals—the busiest professional man has more time, I presume, than a professional society woman. Then tomorrow when I come I'll bring you a selection of clipped advertisements."

But he only brought one, reading thus:

"Country board, large airy rooms, excellent table, home comforts; quiet, healthful, mountain scenery.

"Address, Miss Millicent Moore, Cherrydale, Storyville county, Virginia."

"Here's your summer home, Mrs. Goldweight," he announced. "A guiding of Providence. Miss Milly never took boarders before. She must have fallen into some trouble. A fine

old house, with all the comforts that I could have wished for Miss Alice. I know, for I've been there myself."

Dear Dr. Wingfield, dear in everything, even his charges—four numerals to the rich and zeros to the poor—hence immensely sought after by both antipodal classes; every man's brother and every child's father. If ever we meet him again at some time or turn of the road we'll know him, won't we, and greet him as a friend?

CHAPTER III.

A VILLAGE HEROINE.

"Sweet promptings unto kindly deeds,
Are in her very look,
We read her face as one who reads,
A true, and holy book."

It is not worth while to seek for Storyville on the map, because it is there, a charming little village, like a shy child hiding its face among the flowers in a valley's lap. A sleek, silver-backed river winds about it and westward are mountains to look up to for that inspiration which such prominent additions lend to the landscape.

"Yes; I always loved the mountains—there's something so high-minded about them," Miss Milly used to say, "but I hate to see Ida sitting and watching them all day, as she does."

"What do you see up yonder, dearie?" she asked one balmy spring afternoon, pausing beside the girl's pillowed chair on the porch. "You never used to be so unnaturally quiet."

"I didn't notice how beautiful everything was, Aunt Milly," answered Ida; "now I have so much time to think in, not stirring around."

And, you know, the mountains are lovely when the sun falls asleep on their shoulder at night, and such soft colors come over them—purple, like the lilacs; pink, like the apple blossoms, and red, like those geraniums Mrs. Page sent us. They're so close to Heaven, or seem to be, and you can't help remembering that our Lord must have loved them, too. Didn't He go up on one to pray and to preach that Sermon that the world ought to live by, and wasn't it up a mountain side that He carried His cross, way up to the top?"

"There, dearie, there," interrupted Miss Milly, "I'm not saying a word against the mountains; Godbethanked for them and everything else that He made; I'm just worrying over you, Ida. Sometimes I feel as though I could give up all the rest for a sight of you running home again, down the road from school, with your yellow hair flying—(it was a pity the Doctor made me cut it off; we might have saved it). Just as bright and stronger than many a girl of your age, and then only fifteen, and all the rest of the journey to go on crutches just because the Colonel's son must go skating on thin ice." Her voice broke.

Neighbors said Miss Milly had shouldered an uncommon load of trouble, but her carry-

ing power just naturally give way when that accident happened which made her niece the "village heroine"

"Auntie, dear, you're breaking your promise to me by grieving;" the girl stroked the woman's hand gently. "At first it did seem to me like night had fallen, but one by one the stars began to come out, and now I see them shining all the time through the pain. You know what Dr. Wingfield said about the Lord's reaching down His hands with the nail-scars in them, and drawing them that suffer closer to His side? And it's such a comfort to think how my sickness came upon me; it might have come anyway, remember, Aunt Milly, and if Roy had sunk that last time,"—she drew a quick breath—"he'd have stayed down. And you can't forget, either, all he said in his letter——"

"They were smooth words, with the gloss of college learning in them," replied Miss Milly, "but the truth of them was the shiniest part. Didn't he owe his life to you, and oughtn't he to be mindful every breath he draws is a borrowed one, borrowed from you, that never thought of yourself, but jumped into that frozen water, and left your health behind you there? As for the grand things he's going

to do with his life, up in his high world, that's all to be read in a book that isn't printed yet. If there's any good in him, I don't see that he can say 'thank you' to his father for it."

"But his mother was a 'dear' Tim says," interrupted Ida. "If she'd only lived; she was kind and——"

"Yes, and they do tell me the Colonel himself was kindly once, but it must have been so long ago he's forgotten what it felt like. He may be a great soldier, as Tim says, but a father who could whip his 6-year-old boy for some slight disobedience the very week after his poor young mother died——"

"Don't, oh, don't!"—the girl shrank as if from a blow.

"Yes, I know," concluded Miss Milly, "I've been sorry, too, for the poor lad more than once. It's many a tear that's rolled down his cheek, no hand but his own wiped away. I don't wonder he has a weak heart that kept him from passing his West Point examination. It's not a boy brought up in fear and trembling that makes the strongest, bravest, truest man. But yonder goes Tim with the Colonel's mail. No letter again about the rooms. Mrs. Evans has every one in her house already engaged for the whole summer."

"We'll rent ours, too, Auntie, dear," responded Ida. "I dreamed last night that somebody took them who wore rings on every finger and Sunday dresses every day, and she staid and staid till the woods turned pretty for October and left us enough money after the debts were paid to buy a new carpet for the sitting-room and a new shawl for you and——"

"Ah, child," exclaimed Aunt Milly, a rare smile lighting her stern, patient face. "What with dreaming all day and dreaming all night, you're just growing into a dreamster, as Monica says. But what encourages me is the rooms will be rented, if it's God's will, and if it's not, He'll send some other way to help us out," and, turning, she passed swiftly into the house.

A moment later a young girl came running up the garden path. "O Miss Milly!" she cried breathlessly, "There's a letter here for you. Father let me have the pleasure of bringing it to you myself. It's the city letter, he thinks, that you've been waiting for about the rooms. And isn't it lovely, Miss Milly, the paper all blue as tho' it had fallen out of the sky?"

"It's some new city fashion," said Miss Milly, taking the square Russian blue envelope

and examining it curiously. "You open it, Kathie. My glass eyes are up-stairs. If it's good news, we'll go out and tell Ida, and if it isn't——"

And so Kathie read :

"Miss Moore:—I'll take your rooms, all of them, from the first of June. Me, my daughter and maid. I do not want any other boarders in the house. Dr. Wingfield recommended you to me. My daughter has been very sick, and he thinks country air will do her more good than Newport, Cape May, or the other places that we are in the habit of going to. Have the carriage meet us at the depot that day at whatever hour our Pullman car will get there.

"I am,

"MRS. ELIZABETH GOLDWEIGHT."

"Well, I declare," exclaimed good, simple Miss Milly; "I never thought of such people as that renting the rooms. I'm afraid there's nothing in the house good enough for them to step upon. Dear, dear!"

"And look here," said Kathie, pointing to the gold monogram and escutcheon that adorned all of Mrs. Goldweight's stationery. "What can it mean, this picture of two lions with their mouths open and their feet up like the circus pictures? Miss Milly," lowering her voice, "could it be that the lady's one of those

lion-tamers that wear such beautiful spangled dresses and go around to all the fine cities?"

"Dr. Wingfield wouldn't have sent that sort of folks to me," responded Miss Milly, emphatically. It's some of his rich patients, and those lions are not a seal of office, but just ornament, I reckon. Rich people are mighty fond of ornament. But what troubles me is sending the carriage—ours is broken down—and the old horse dead. I'll have to ask Joe Burton to go for them in his old wagon with the canvas top to keep the sun off. And how will we know what hour they'll reach here, if we don't know what hour they'll start? Run, and read the letter to Ida, dearie. She's out on the back porch, and I'll stay here alone a minute till I've said a prayer to steady me."

CHAPTER IV.

MISS MILLY'S BOARDERS.

"And all earth's trials never spoiled
A spirit that had faith in Heaven—"

Joe Burton drew rein an instant before Miss Milly's gate on his way to meet her boarders at the station. "Yes, it's early, mighty early," he called out, cheerfully, "but I reckoned I'd better start anyhow. Them rich folks ain't the kind to keep waitin' for you. And I hadn't nothin' at all to do home today. It's just a Sunday for me clapped right into the middle of the week."

Who would know (save those who knew *him*) that he'd done double work the day previous in order to put himself at Miss Milly's disposition?

"Folks ought to belong to one another in this world anyway, and them that the Lord made neighbors can't be too obligin'," was a favorite saying of Joe's. So, patient sentry in his droll, tent-like looking wagon, he sat there at the station while the long June morning wore to afternoon. Yes, it "was nigh to 4 o'clock, the sun said so," before the train he

had been waiting for arrived. Mrs. Goldweight, daughter and maid were the only passengers to alight at Storyville, and Burton always declared he knew them on sight just like he'd been introduced.

His big, rough straw hat in his big, rough hand, he hastened forward,

"Good-day, ma'am," said he. "Miss Milly sent me to meet you all. She ain't used her carryall since it followed her brother's funeral. We know this wagon ain't what you'd expect, but the roads is easy, the horses ain't ambitious, though they've rested all day, and Miss Milly she's fixed it up inside with bed pillars for the young lady—daughter—that's been sick. She's nursed a heap of sickness herself, Miss Milly has, and she knows that sick folks needs softness 'round 'em—all kinds of softness. Lemme help carry them things, Miss?" turning from the mistress to the bundle-laden maid.

"Alice," exclaimed Mrs. Goldweight, completely ignoring Joe, "Did you ever know of such an outrage. I'll never speak to Dr. Wingfield again, sending us down to this horrible place. We'll go straight back this minute, Minette. See when the next train starts!"

"O Mamma," interposed Alice, "My head aches so from the journey. Please couldn't we stay here one night anyhow—to rest?"

The mother, scarlet with anger, glanced at her child's white face, and wavered.

"Minette, what shall I do?" she cried, dropping for the instant her usual pretentious haughtiness with servants, and turning almost appealingly to her "jewel of a French maid."

"Can we ever get into that—that?" scornfully pointing the Dresden handle of her parasol towards the old farm wagon.

"It can only be as Madame choose," replied Minette diplomatically; "but I vill say zat I have never feel so shock since ze Germans enter Paris. But if ze head of Mees Alice ache, and it is so near ze night——"

"Well, come on!" said Mrs. Goldweight furiously. She was a very pretty woman in her evening dresses—a very ugly one in her tempers.

"Gold's mighty heavy," mused Joe, as they drove silently along, "and it certainly drags folks down that carrys too much of it. And there's heaps and heaps and heaps of things that it won't buy."

After a while it occurred to him that it might be more polite to engage in conversation. As

Miss Milly's ambassador, he wished to treat the royal guests royally. So from the bridge to "Cherrydales Gate" he kept up a running fire of talk.

"Over yonder's 'The Pines'—Colonel Ergood's place, though folks says it ain't his shore 'nuff; he got it by a law turn from his cousin, Captain Page. Colonel Ergood, you see, never resigned till long after the war was over, kept on fightin' Injuns. There were'nt many *this* side the line that didn't pull off their coats and jump in to fight for their State—but he was only *half* Virginian, and I reckon the breaking out of war just then, between him and Captain Page, because of Miss Ellen, they both loved, choosin' one instead of the other, had most to do with it.

"Till then, them cousins was just tied together with a hard knot, boys and men, foster brothers, too, and both in the army; but it seems like in one night, a flamin' sword struck between 'em, enemies clear through, they could stand close together as me and you is sittin', ma'am, and not know each other. So if Captain Page went out and put on a gray suit, Colonel Ergood, he stays in and keeps on his blue one, and not a thread of lint that Miss Ellen made shouldn't go into none of *his* wounds. And off

he marches, leavin' his mother (she was *all* Virginian) to break her heart there on the old place, she and her sister, and both dead and buried before Appomattox Day. Then maybe a year went by (a handful of slaves stayed on, never studying about the freedom their master 'd got for 'em) when he sent down a white gardener to rake up the paths for a home-comin', and next thing there was the Colonel with a suit of white hair on his head, from remorseifyin', and a young wife on his arm, from way up East, I reckon, 'cause she just kind of naturally died of neighborly neglect and home-sickness by the time their boy was six years old.

"Over yonder by the Crick, that's Captain Page's cottage, no bigger'n a button 'longside 'The Pines.' And Miss Ellen that married him, beaten and robbed, and wounded, as he was left so por', and that bad off, she has to raise flowers for market, as his widder! Yes, that war was an awful thing, Ma'am. It just spat-tered the whole country with blood and tears that ain't dried off yet. And it scared the women folks out of their head. My poor Hannah was so outdone that she buried all our savin's under a tree in the orchard to keep the Yankees from tastin' 'em, and from that day to the day

she died—it'll be eight year come August—she never known *which* tree—I don't reckon there's an inch of ground I ain't turned up huntin' for 'em to keep her from worryin' and to pay off the mortgage and send our Jim to school. That's what I want it for most, for Jim, but I reckon in His own good time the Lord'll point out the place. That's my farm to the right. It looks nice with the yeller evenin' sun on it. There'll be a good crop of corn this year if the weather keeps favorin', and potatoes is flourishin', but there's just Jim and me to work it. and Jim ain't strong enough for farm work. Its all achin' tiredness for him, and his heart away longin' for school. There's Miss Milly's, yonder, Ma'am. You've lived in grand houses, but there ain't more home comforts in 'em than you'll find under her roof. And as for Miss Ida, her niece, she that's crippled up with rheumatism 'long of savin' the Colonel's son from drownin' that time, she's just a glass frame for the dear Lord's picture. You can see His love and peace shinin' through all the time, and the best people in this world would be better for havin' talked to her. Here we are, and here's Miss Milly comin' to speak a welcome to you. Well, good night to you all, and a pleasant wakin'."

CHAPTER V.

THE MEETING.

"When the lilac was fresh, with its glory of leaves
And the swallows came fluttering under the eaves ;
When the bluebird flashed by like a magical thing—
And you looked for a fairy astride of his wing."

"Mamma, dear, remember they're Dr. Wingfield's friends, and it *is* a pretty place. See how lovely those red roses are?" Alice whispered the words in her mother's ear, as Joe was preparing to help her out of the wagon. So, by the time Miss Milly reached the gate, Mrs. Goldweight had spread over her discontented face one of those pale, thin smiles that some people can assume at an instant's notice to meet their friends with or their enemies, if need be.

"I'm very glad to see you, Ma'am," said Miss Milly cordially, with extended hand, "and I hope you didn't find the ride up too uncomfortable."

"It was perfectly horrid," responded Alice's mother, warmly; "I never would have come if I had known, but now that I'm here——" She gave her shoulders the Parisian shrug which she had learned from Minette.

"You'll try and make the best of it," concluded Miss Milly, coloring with annoyance. "Then come right up to your rooms. You must be very tired from the journey——" her motherly glance passing from Mrs. Goldweight to her daughter, and thence to bundle-laden Minette.

"And you, too, dear," she added; "just leave all those things on the sofa. Monica'll carry them upstairs for you."

"No, no; let her carry my things," interposed Mrs. Goldweight, haughtily. "She's only a servant—my maid."

"Still, she's flesh and blood," ventured Miss Milly, "and I beg your pardon, Ma'am, but wages ain't all that's owing to a good, faithful servant—at least to my way of thinking."

"Such kind words I have not hear spoken since ze dear Priest bless me '*Adieu*' at home," poor Minette confessed to Miss Milly that night. "For you see, it is but ze wages zat such as Madame Goldweight ever give to those zat serve them."

When Alice awoke next morning the birds under the eaves were hailing with song one of those rare days that glorify the month of June. Through the fresh dimity curtains the sunbeams stole, caressing now one, now another,

article in the cool, large room, with its massive, old-fashioned mahogany furniture, four-post bedstead, straight back chairs, quaint blue China jars on the mantel and the simple pictures in rustic frames that covered the white, low-ceiled walls. And, as she lay looking up and around her, it seemed as if some of the spirit, the simple peace of the place, descended upon her.

"I'm better, Minette," she answered brightly. "Tell Miss Moore she needn't send *me* up any breakfast; I'll go down. And you needn't bother with my hair this morning. Just braid it down my back; there's nobody here to see me, and you'll have plenty to do dressing Mamma's, and all the unpacking."

* * *

"And what does the young lady and her mother look like, Ida, dear?"

Kathie came tiptoe up the back porch step.

"I haven't seen them yet; they arrived late," answered Ida, in a whisper. "The young lady's been sick. Hush, dear, don't let us wake her. It's early for city folks to be stirring."

"And isn't it the day's best part that they lose with their sleepiness?" returned Kathie, archly. "Father's got all his pansies transplanted to the new bed since sunrise. We want

to make the place look fine, for Mr. Roy's coming home. Only a fortnight more, and college is over, you know." She blushed; but it scarcely deepened the rose-color her cheeks always wore. A picture of health and beauty she was, the gardener's daughter, her steadfast Irish eyes so "darkly, wonderfully blue," shaded by long, curling lashes, were surely the loveliest eyes in the world.

"And see my pretty coral set?" she added gayly, pointing to the red, ripe cherries which she had twined by their stems into a necklace and earrings. "The city ladies upstairs haven't anything like it. They can't eat their kind of jewels when they're hungry, can they?" laughingly suiting the action to the word. "But, maybe, rich people never do feel hungry?"

"O, there's another sort of hungriness than just for breakfast and dinner, dear, and the rich, too, often feel it," replied the sick girl, a solemn look dropping like a veil over her sweet, spiritual face.

"I heard Dr. Wingfield tell Aunt Milly once that he'd found some of his wealthiest patients dying of starvation of the soul, lying on pillows stuffed with gold pieces. We ought to feel sorry for rich people, especially those whose thoughts are set upon their treasure in this

world and who lay up nothing for the next. And I'm so afraid, from what Aunt Milly said last night, that Mrs. Goldweight is one of that kind now, and that her daughter will be."

An hour later Ida and Alice had met.

"And you suffer all the time, too," said Alice pityingly. "Why, how *can* you bear it. If I'd just have a nervous headache, I want to die right away."

"Oh, it would be very wrong to wish that," answered Ida. "It's a privilege to offer our dear Lord the patient bearing of any pain or trial He may send us. The trouble I give is all that grieves me. I have everything to be happy with—the kindest of friends—Kathie O'Connor and Myra Page, who sings and recites so prettily, and Jim Burton, who comes to study his lessons with me. Aunt Milly is all love, and it's so lovely here"—she waved her hand to that corner of the world in which she dwelt, and her large, luminous eyes, after resting an instant on the familiar mountains, returned to the strange girl's face. "I hope it will seem so to you, too, after you've been here a little while," she added, wistfully. "I'd like you to remember having been happy here with us, Miss Goldweight."

"O, I shall be," responded Alice warmly. "It's a beautiful place. I feel already it will do wonders for me." (And so it did).

"I never would have believed," said Mrs. Goldweight angrily, (Fix my hair all over again, Minette, you've made me look like a fright. What a hideous glass!) I never would have believed, Alice, that a girl brought up as you have been, and so much money spent on you, could tell me this horrible old backwoods town and this horrid old farmhouse was a pleasant place to spend a summer in, and my Newport cottage lying empty. If I can worry through a week of it I'll have done my duty humoring that old foggy Doctor."

"O Mamma, how can you speak so of Dr. Wingfield?" cried Alice. "He's a darling, and this place is pleasant, as he said. I am rested and stronger. You've never been sick a day, and you can't understand how it feels; but I've always tried to do everything to please you, Mamma,"—with a kiss—"and you're going to stay here to please me."

So it was the "mother," the sole good, perhaps, in Mrs. Goldweight, that made her remain at "Cherrydale." Since, putting aside her selfish wishes for the first time in her life, she stayed watching Alice's color and spirits

coming back to her till weeks merged into months, and "the woods began to turn pretty for October." But she could not help repining that, instead of the score of admirers among them maybe a "real nobleman," who would have fluttered about her heiress-daughter, as a Newport *belle*, here in Storyville, with its plain shirt-sleeved population there was but one person good looking or well dressed enough for her to talk to or walk with, and that was the Colonel's son, a slender, gentle-mannered young fellow, just home from college.

And yet, Alice declared that she was "perfectly happy!"

CHAPTER VI.

"TIM" AND THE COLONEL.

"Be not too ready to condemn,
The wrongs thy brothers may have done,
Ere we, too, harshly censure them
For human faults, ask—'Have I none?' "

The gossips of Storyville must have made use of Colonel Ergood's personality as a sort of *Pere Croque mitaine*, to frighten the children into good behavior. Or, perhaps it was because they said he was so wicked that whenever they met him a sudden hush would fall upon their noisy gayety, and, shrinking into whispering groups on either side of the road, they waited till he passed.

"I hate him," Myra Page would say, looking after him with flashing eyes; "I hate him." And, when some older companion chided her for talking "so naughty," she would fiercely continue: "Why, wouldn't I hate the man who lives in *our* house and has everything *we* don't have? It's bad enough that Mamma made Papa forgive him the last thing,—I never will, never! If he hadn't ruined us, I could have gone to the city, taken lessons, and

been a great singer. And now—I can do nothing. Of course, I hate him. I'll say it to myself. I'll think it, and I'll say it to you, if I dare not at home."

(The only sweet thing about Myra Page was her voice, while her mother, truest disciple of the Gospel of Love, kissed with smiling lips every cross that came to her, and, maybe, her greatest cross was that very Myra, since every woman's deepest griefs and joys come to her through her children. An old writer, whom you may read some day in the original Spanish, has somewhere said: "Ah, the heart of a mother, with all its wondrous workings and exquisite mechanism! Alas, that so precious a thing must be entrusted to the thoughtless possession of a child, one knows not at what moment to be broken like a toy!" *Thoughtless* possession," that's the word, if we stopped to *think*, dear, none of us would ever grieve our mothers, would we?)

Glancing neither to the right or left, the Colonel would ride slowly by, an ideal military figure, mounted on a splendid gray horse, with silken, flowing mane, white as her rider's moustache, his war steed "Waterloo," familiarly called "Loo." "Tim," the Colonel's "grand old gardener," who had served all through the

war under his command, told a prettier story about "Loo" than some others told about her master.

"Sure, Ma'am," said he, one day laying down the flower cuttings he had come to bring Miss Milly, and trying to answer some questions Mrs. Goldweight had asked him about the Colonel's eccentricities. "Sure, ma'am, he isn't like ivery one you meet. In this world it's very like it is in the army—there's many companies of men and only a few officers to each. It's not for us to be judging a gintleman by the outside of him, and ivery one of us might be better inside than we are. It's a brave and illigant soldier that the Colonel is, Ma'am, and a niver-to-be-forgotten sight, how he'd ride to the front wavin' his life in the face of the inemy's fire like the red flag that it was and daring 'em to come and take it. They may be tellin' you here what they plaze about Master *now*, in those younger days he was different. You see, Ma'am, and you've heard it, if you've been here a day, the poor lady he married that year after the war, she was just the lady he *married* and not the lady he *loved*. If you'd think a bit, you'd see that would make a great difference to the mind of him and its happiness, the more so as the lady he loved had first

gone over to his inemy, Captain Page, and married *him*. It's his heart's first love that makes or unmakes a man's life, I'm thinkin'. I mind mewell the first day I saw my Kathie's mother." He drew himself up to his full six feet, too, with the proud look that became so well a descendant of O'Connor's kingly race. "I was a man grown, and never a spark of love had fired my heart livin' on the farm my father left me (he was 'Lord Eilleen's gamekeeper and my grandfather afore him Ma'am), till comin' out of the little church in Glengarry that Sunday afternoon in June, I met my Kathleen. There was an ould beggar who always stood outside the door singin' a mournful tune that rhymed with 'blind,' about the dear Lord's givin' us eyes to pity with and hearts to make us kind, and the sun had come slantin' 'round till it shone on his bare gray head, and there was my Kathleen (she was the new Doctor's daughter then, Ma'am), there was Kathleen just leadin' him by the hand to a shady place, and he blessin' her the while for the tender soul she was. And it was then and there I says to meself: 'Tim O'Connor,' says I, 'it's a poor beggar that you are from this moment—a beggar for that maiden's love. Its her kindness you'll be askin' for yourself, only it's not into

the shade but into the sunlight she'll be leadin' you when she gives *you* her hand.' And, sure, so it was. She led me into the light and kept me there till she went to Heaven with all the other children, and left me Kathie." But Tim's reminiscences were rudely interrupted by Mrs. Goldweight's hard, unsympathetic voice:

"You started to tell us about the Colonel's horse," she said.

Tim came back to himself with a start.

"Sure and I did and I will. It's the human-minded horse that Loo is; you've only to look in her eyes to see what a heart she has. She'd carried the Colonel through all his fights. But the eve of the battle of Malvern Hill he found her fallen lame—and no wonder, after all the forced marches she'd made without a complainin' word. So he calls me to him. 'Tim,' says he, 'Take her to the nearest farmhouse, and offer a good price for the best care. There'll be a bloody engagement tomorrow early, and it'll be the first into which "Loo" and I haven't gone together, and I'm sorry,' says he. In those days the Colonel was softer spoken than now. And "Loo" looks 'round at him, sayin' plain as a horse could, 'It's sorry that I am meself, Sir. There'll be no other that'll carry you so aisy and so far to the front, where

a true soldier and his horse belongs.' Then I takes 'Loo' and started out, choosing by preference an old white farmhouse where there were plenty of children playin' and women-folks workin' around. 'Here there'll be kindness shown to a poor dumb beast,' thinks I, 'even if it's an enemy's.' And, sure, they promised the best they had and showed me where to give her a good supper, and I said good-bye and left her in the barn. That night we advanced some seven miles, and at daybreak there *was* a 'bloody engagement.' After three hours' hard fightin' with the rebels beginnin' to fall back, the Colonel, like the illigant soldier he was, standin' up in the stirrups and wavin' his sword was leadin' the charge. I was followin' him with me eye and meself, when all at once I heard a neighin' behind me, and, whist! there was 'Loo' without saddle or bridle, but a bit of broken rope danglin' from her neck.

"She wasn't the horse to stay nursin' her knee with the roar of cannon a few miles off and the voice of her master shoutin' 'Forward!' It was 'forward' she dashed to the very front, where 'a true soldier's horse belonged,' and it was his side that she reached just as the horse that he rode was shot from under him. Thinkin' our Colonel killed when he fell, we wavered.

But, no; in an instant, begorra, there he was astride of 'Loo'—and it was 'forward' she was still goin'. Then, with a cheer we followed, and the battle was won."

* * *

"Yes," said Miss Milly, "I've heard that story before; we don't know, Mrs. Goldweight, there's so many folds that keep the dear Lord's designs from showing through, but time draws the curtains all aside. Maybe, there'll come a day in the Colonel's life yet when we'll see why that horse was sent to him in his sore need. There's one act of his that looked mighty bad when he did it, but that's turned out for good in the end. It was the day of Captain Page's funeral. Two of the Colonel's servants asked leave to go to it, in memory of the days when he and his cousin owned them together. And he gave it kindly, Pete says. But when they returned, he met them at the gate, saying he was glad to discover who were the traitors under his roof, and forbade them ever to enter his door again. And when the poor old creatures asked what should they do, he told them to go to their 'other master's widow.' 'She'll need you,' said he, with his face white and set. 'She'll need you now to work the garden for her.' And so Pete and his wife went back to

Mrs. Page's, and she welcomed them, and they've lived there ever since raising flowers and vegetables for market. being life's greatest comfort to her and Myra. I often wonder if the Colonel hadn't thought out that way to do something for the widow of the man he'd ruined and hated, being, too, as she was the same lady, people say, *he once loved*. At all events, it's better to take the trouble to look underneath everything for good than to be always seeing evil on the surface.

CHAPTER VII.

A BOOK THAT ALICE READ.

"Do we not owe to those who live under the same heaven as ourselves the aid not only of our acts but of our purposes? Should not every human life be to us like a vessel that we accompany with our prayers for a happy voyage?"

"Lor' bless you, child, you won't tell nobody, will you, honey?" Monica came close to Ida's chair. "I'se gwine ter make Miss Alice an angel cake wid eighteen eggs in it, yellors and whites, for Sunday. It's her birthday. I done hear her tellin' dat little Minette so, and lookin' at a present dat's jus' come from her uncle in Californy—a green leather pocketbook stuff full of greenbacks. An' she jus' toss it down an' say she wisht he'd send her 'sumfin beside money all de time.' Humph, what she want wid more money, anyhow? Dough it 'pears like in dis worl' de more folks has de more is give to 'em. But dar certainly is sumfin 'bout dat Miss Alice dat makes yer feel yer could almost lub her—if it warn't for her Ma."

So that Sunday morning a great bunch of white and scarlet roses went up to Alice's room accompanied by a little book and a note from Ida:

"Dear Miss Alice:—There's nothing carries love so well as flowers—so I send you some with mine. I shall miss you dreadfully when you go away next week, but I'm glad you could be here for today, though I'm afraid you'll find it dull without a party. A birthday seems to me such a solemn time, when we can think the whole year over, and see whether you've done all the good you could, and been patient under any trial the dear Lord sent you. O, Miss Alice, there's so much I want to say to you and can't, or write it either. The little book Dr. Wingfield gave me, I thought you'd like to read it, lying in the hammock while we're at church. Its such a pretty story and the last words stay so long in the mind.

"Yours very lovingly,

"IDA BURLEIGH."

An hour later Alice opened the "little book." Its title was "*Miss Ruth's Bridesmaid.*" On the flyleaf was written: "Ida Burleigh, from her friend, W. J. Wingfield, Mayday," and below these verses, their last lines underscored:

"Who drives the horses of the Sun,
Shall lord it for a day—
Better the lowly deed were done
And kept the humble way."

"The rust will find the sword of fame,
The dust will hide a crown—
Ay, none shall nail so high his name,
But Time will tear it down."

"The happiest heart that ever beat,
Was in some quiet breast,
*Who found the common daylight sweet,
And left to God the rest."*

Then she began to read the story. Surely, we would like to read it with her.

MISS RUTH'S BRIDESMAID.

"Dare, I of it vas sure," as Mademoiselle, the French teacher, says. Always on such nights as this, when the wind is trying to go to house-keeping in the chimney and the rain is tapping on the pane as if to reproach us with it's homelessness, your four little hands try to find room for themselves in mine, and the gray and the blue of lifted eyes unite in pleading for "a story Aunt Grace." Don't you know it's very, very naughty to make anyone tell stories or to tell them yourself? And, yet, here am I, just because I happen to be Mamma's sister and your Aunt Grace, whenever the wish seizes you, sent out to walk up and down the streets of Fancytown, looking for little girls and boys good enough to be your playmates for an hour.

Well, Helen Ferris is the name of the guest to whom I shall introduce you tonight, and whom you must make welcome and love for

my sake at least, until you come to know her enough to love and welcome her for her own.

In the first place (though that, I hope, is not her first claim upon our esteem), Helen was an heiress—her Uncle Charlie's heiress. Her poor Uncle Charlie! Now, I'm afraid by the questions Lily's eyes are not too polite to ask, that before pitying him with me, her feminine curiosity must be satisfied as to what his trouble was. Indeed, I scarcely know how to tell you, unless you can imagine what Papa would do or could ever have done without your Mamma; for there had been a sweet little lady with brown eyes that Uncle Charlie loved dearly, dearly, who loved him dearly, dearly, but whose father would not consent to their marriage. Disobey him she could not—she was the only child left now—so she turned resolutely into the path of duty and kept her place beside him.

It chanced that just at that time of parting between Helen's uncle and the little brown-eyed lady there had come a piteous cry for help from a fever-stricken city in the South—a call for brave men to take the place of brave men who had succumbed, leaving hundreds dying for want of medical attendance.

Uncle Charlie was a doctor and a brave man. He closed his office, made a will in his niece's favor, said good-bye to everybody and everything, and volunteered. But, when the doomed city breathed once more, and those who had left their homes to succor it had returned to them, he staid on among the new scenes and new people and tried to find his life-work there.

So there were two miniatures that Helen's father took out of a drawer for her to look at and kiss every night. One was of a lovely woman with rose-leaf cheeks and pansy eyes and lips so full of tenderness that Helen was sure it was only the glass which kept her from feeling the kiss they always returned to her, and the other of a man, so very handsome, with dark eyes just like Papa's, the same smile locked in them and the key lost—Mamma and Uncle Charlie. So in her baby thoughts the two were only "gone away." "That God would bless and send them both back soon," she asked in the sweet little prayer of her own composing, which—Papa kneeling, too, her pearl rosary held between them could never say aloud after her because it made him cry.

Where did they live? In a beautiful old house that Grandpa had left together with his large practice, to his eldest son, Percy, Helen's

father. It was perched on the slope of a green hill overlooking the town like a great, white bird with its wings spread, as if ready to fly away at any time.

It was a saying: "There'd always been an angel among the ladies and a doctor among the men of the Ferris family," ever since the first Dr. Ferris, years ago, had brought his sweet, young wife there. And there'd been glad old times then when the dining table had four for each side of it, but by and by there came to be only Gran'pa and Gran'ma and the two boys left.

Charlie to be a lawyer and Percy a doctor—that was their father's ambition—but when, to his surprise, they both showed such a taste for medicine, such a determination to be doctors and nothing else, he had sent them off to the same college, whence they graduated with highest honors within a year or two of each other.

Then Charlie had to establish himself in the city and Percy brought his bride to the old home and associated himself in practice with his father, who used to say, it wouldn't do to cast such a reflection on the salubrity of Dimpleton as to have three doctors in one family, or rather a family of three doctors in its midst.

But now Gran'pa and Gran'ma were both dead; Charlie far away, and only two left since that June morning when the hearse had borne away Helen's fair girl-mother, leaving to such wee baby hands the task of mending a broken heart and comforting dear Papa. And the sweet way she accomplished that task! "Shure, she was a rare letter of condolence from Heaven," said good, faithful nurse Norah, "seeming to understand from the first what Mamma had left her to do."

Perhaps it was because her soft cheek had felt so many tears fall upon it, and the coral lips' first words had been: "Poor Papa; Papa don't cry; Baby cry, too!" that Helen grew to be such a thoughtful, grave, mature child, such as anyone in affliction would turn to and wish to have near them, for there was so much sympathy in the serious eyes and her very gayest moods had the tempered brightness of sunlight in a shady place.

Everybody loved her; they could as well not have loved flowers, birds, light, air. A very uncommon child, with ever a first thought for others, and it was because her father said that when she knew how to read, write, sew and knit she could write letters to Uncle Charlie, read aloud for blind Mrs. Marsh and make mit-

tens for Maggie Warren's beautiful "twinses," that she learned so quickly to do all these things. For he told her these were five-finger exercises in good deeds within the compass of little hands which put them in practice for grand symphonies when they were grown. To give her pleasure, he sometimes took her with him to visit the sick. Bright and early, when the carriage came, she was waiting just as if she, too, were a little doctor, with a basket of dainties or of flowers. And pale faces flushed with pleasure when she entered the close rooms like a waft of sea air, with her cool, caressing touch and her: "Oh, Mrs. Anyone, I was *sure* you'd be better this morning, and I'm so glad," till her "sureness" and "gladness" made the sufferer really feel they were better. Indeed many people could hardly tell you whether it was the Doctor's medicine or his little girl that made them well.

"Arrah, she was a darlint," in her loving nurse's words. "Iverything she says has a swate taste to it and iverything she does ought to be printed in a storybook with a picture to it."

It was one of those balmy days, talking in bird song and thinking in flowers, which belong to the month of May. Helen's father had

driven to town, and she, her lessons all studied, decided that there was no better way to keep house than to take her dolls out on the lawn. One of those dolls, by the way—the first she had ever owned—was an unbreakable affair, not a bit pretty. Yet how dearly Helen loved her! If by any chance, waking in the night, she discovered she had forgotten her bedfellow she would spring up in the dark and get her, with redoubled caresses compensating for the suffering and unrest such neglect must have caused dolly. Don't laugh, Lily! It would be a great deal better if we, even we grown people, attributed more than we do the power of *feeling* to things about us. In fearing to hurt the things that cannot feel we might learn to spare those that can.

So, when Papa brought her home one holiday a lovely wax doll in satin and curls, she took it with a gracious "thank you, Papa; O thank you, but what will Lucy think?" as her admiring eyes wandered over her new playmate and its dangerous contrast with the old became painfully apparent. "I'll have to cut my love in two, you see, now, Papa, and give this one half because she's so beautiful; but then"—and she ran over and gathered the old Lucy up close to her loyal little heart. "This

one," she hesitated for words to express her feelings. "It's the same way with dolls as with people, is it?" said Papa, smiling. "Some are friends and some can never be anything but acquaintances."

Being a Doctor's child, Helen had a way of feeling dolly's pulse, and it happened that with advancing years Lucy's health failed. She required putting to bed so often that she was little better than a chronic invalid, while Miss Fanny of Paris was always considered strong enough to pass whole nights watching beside her.

That was the way matters and dolls stood, or, rather, sat and lay, that May afternoon. Fanny, in her wicker chair on one side of Lucy's hammock and Helen on the other, softly singing to her.

Suddenly she started to her feet. A strange man had entered the open gate and was standing near, leaning against a tree. His clothes were worn and dust-gray, his face haggard. Its white weariness appealed to Helen's ready sympathy. "Do you want anything, Sir?" she asked. "Yes, child," he replied, baring his gray head. "They discharged me from the hospital a week ago, but I have journeyed many miles since then and eaten nothing all day. Passing here, I grew so faint. Everything around me is black and whirling."

"I will send you some dinner," cried the Doctor's little girl. "Sit down in the arbor there and rest till I come back."

She flew across the lawn to the house, in a few moments returning followed by the new maid. As bidden by her little lady, but with fear and trembling at sight of the drooping figure on the bench. Bridget drew out the arbor's rustic table on which only doll feasts had been set before, and spread upon it the contents of her well-filled waiter.

As the poor man raised the cup to his parched lips, Helen, motioning Bridget to follow, hastened out. "He might not eat all he needed if we stayed and watched him," she whispered.

"Shure, and do you know what you be doin', Miss Helen?" exclaimed the frightened Bridget. "It's a tramp that he is. Do you mind the shoe of his foot and the shaveless hair of his head? The Holy Mother, save us, it's not the bit and the 'sup' that he's afther, but the chance to rob and kill us all. And me puttin' a knife on the waiter, too, as you told me, Miss! Shure, my heart is all atrimble to——"

"Why, Bridget," interrupted Helen, with the sweetest little laugh, "he would not hurt anybody. He's walked so far he almost fell down

passing our gate. Papa would not wish us to be afraid of a poor man fainting by the roadside. Poor people always come here. You run back to the house, Bridget, and stay on the porch till you see him go."

Bespeaking the protection of all the Saints, Bridget obeyed, while her young mistress returned to her dolls.

After a little while, forgetful of any other listeners, Helen resumed her interrupted lullaby.

"Hush thee, my baby, loving arms fold thee,
God the dear Father, He loveth us all.
To birds in the nest He giveth His care;—
Not one wee sparrow unheeded can fall.
To lambs that are shorn He tempers the cold
And bringeth the lost sheep back to the fold.
Fast fall His blessings, my baby on thee—
Some day thou'll pray to Him, darling with me."

A strange sound in the arbor made Helen look in. There sat the poor man, his face buried in his hands, sobbing bitterly.

"Don't cry, Sir," she said softly. "My Papa can help you; he'll be home in a little while."

"Help *me!*" exclaimed the man, almost fiercely, looking up at the white-robed figure framed in the vine-wreathed door—a sweet

child-missionary sent to carry light and hope to a benighted heart. "Help *me!* No one can do that. It's too late." Then, in softened tones he added: "Go back to your play, child. I did not want to frighten you. It was your pretty song that made me cry. My little girl would be just your size now."

"Would she?" answered Helen, with interest. "How glad she will be to see you. Have you been away a long time?"

"The four best years of my life spent in *prison.*" At the word "prison" Helen drew back. Perceiving the motion, he continued, still more bitterly: "Yes, you may well shrink. That is the way everybody will turn away from me. I know it. I used to say if I lived my term out I'd never come back to my people. I'd let them forget me. But no sooner was I free than I started straight for home. I'm almost there now—but I'm not going in. I'll only walk by the little house tonight when they're both asleep. Up in the city there are plenty like me. Nobody will know me there, but here in the old place I can't live. There's no room for me. A branded man, my innocence counts for nothing. For I am innocent," he added; "God knows it. Innocent of the crime for which I suffered, as you are, little child!"

"Then," cried Helen, her fair face lighting up, "How happy you ought to be! Anyone can bear punishment easily if they know they have not done anything wrong."

Struck by a new thought, he hesitated. "But, my child, my little Bertha!" he exclaimed. "People are so cruel. They must have told her—taunted her with it. To the world a convicted man is a guilty man."

"But you must tell your little girl you are not guilty," cried Helen. "Tell her you are innocent the moment you get home, and" she added, with inspiring earnestness, "you must go straight home to tell her so."

"Home?" he repeated, wildly. "Poor wreck that I am! What have I to take to my home, to my child?"

O, Helen was so sorry for him! Never did Papa return from a journey without a present for her. And to think of this innocent man, who had been in prison and had nothing to carry home to his child!

"Why, take her this," she cried, snatching Fanny from her chair and handing her to him. "And, wait, a bunch of flowers, too!"

She was gone. He looked at the doll, then folded her in his arms as tho' she had been a thing of life, rose and walked down to meet Helen.

"The daffodils are so pretty!" she said. "You told me you were almost home. You must not linger on the way and let them fade. You will be sure to go straight home?"

"I shall not linger on the way!" he replied, brokenly, "nor falter on the threshold with these to carry in. Good-bye, child! Pray for me. If the prayers of a poor, lost soul are heard, God's blessings will rain upon your golden head."

"Good-bye, Sir!" Helen looked shyly up, and added: "Will you please hold Dolly down?"

As he did so, she kissed poor Fanny good-bye, her mere "acquaintance" doll—but all the same, a gift from Papa—going away forever.

That was the reason why, when she saw her again, there was a long pink smear on Fanny's rosy waxen cheek where the man's tear and the child's kiss had mingled together.

"Saw her again?" cries Lily.

Yes, dear. When Helen told her father about the innocent prisoner, and what she had done for him——

"Ah, my darling little Samaritan!" exclaimed Papa. "That must have been the husband of a patient of mine, poor Mrs. Orme!"

And the next morning during a long drive with Helen, he stopped at the Orme cottage.

As he opened the gate a little girl carrying a doll ran to him. "Oh, Doctor," she cried, "Mamma's better. Papa's come home. Papa's come home! See what he brought me?" and she held up Fanny.

"How beautiful!" said the Doctor, delightedly. "Run out to the carriage, Bertha, and show her to my little girl."

"And what became of Mr. Orme?"

Why, as Helen's cradle song said:

"Not one wee sparrow unheeded can fall."

Very soon after his release from his unjust imprisonment the wicked fellow clerk, on whose testimony mainly he had been convicted, confessed on his death-bed that he had committed the robbery for which Mr. Orme was punished. Whereupon his old employers, their trust restored, placed him in charge of their business in the city. And the very next Christmas morning after they moved from Dimpleton, the express brought for "Miss Helen Ferris, care Dr. Ferris," a tiny box. When opened there lay, wide awake on its pink cotton pillow, a gold ring set with a shining pearl, and on a slip of paper was written:

"For the little hand that once pointed out, to a poor lost soul, the way home!"

Now I must tell you about one of the parties that Helen's father gave for her tenth birthday, because it was something said there that fell like a seed in the fresh, fertile ground of her little guests' hearts, and grew and grew till its fruit was named the "Helen Ferris Club."

"You may have whom you like," said Papa. So there were ten invitations sent out traced on blue-tinted paper with tiny figure "tens" in gold scattered across the right-hand corner—the same place where, for her seventh birthday her father had engraved two lines from Jean Ingelow's first sweet "Song of Seven:

"I am old, so old, I can write a letter,
I'm seven times one to-day!"

And ten plates were set on the happy old dining table, ten welcomes for Helen, to speak standing just inside the broad "come-in"-looking front door, and, when she had said "Grace" she took her place at the head of the table, and I'm sure no company had a sweeter or more gracious hostess.

After dinner there were games, dancing and music. Guy Morris and Helen sang a duet called "Charity," where he, as a hard rich man,

passed by a little beggar without heeding her pitiful prayer. "Just one penny to take home to mother tonight," into which she threw so much expression that a sorry look came around several pretty mouths.

"Dear, oh!" sighed Flossie Gray (that was her grandmother's way of exclaiming), "it makes me wish that party dresses had pockets in them."

"Mine has one," said Pearl Mathews, drawing out a silk purse and thence a silver dollar, which she looked at as if it were a comfort to feel that should anyone ask *her* for a penny, she could give it that very minute.

"Think of any little girls like us," continued Flossie, "asking for a penny for her mother and not getting it! Why, I feel as tho' I wanted to go and find such a one and give her some money before I went home tonight.

"Could you really find such a one?" said Guy Morris, with sudden earnestness. Nobody knew, I think, what a good boy Guy was, with all his wild spirits and mischievous pranks. There was no one at home to call out the good that was in him. His father was nothing but a ledger, full of straight lines of figures, who deemed his paternal duty discharged when he put his son at the best school and allowed him plenty of spending money.

"Ask Helen," answered Pearl. "My Mamma says she and her father know and care for all the poor and sick in the town.

"There are two or three poor children that she clothes, and I brought this dollar, which I saved for charity out of my pin money, to give her this afternoon, because Mamma said she would know where to bestow it for me most worthily. She—"

"No, indeed,"—interrupted the young hostess, blushing at her friend's words, as true merit does when it finds that the "right hand" has learned what the "left hand" doeth. "I have done nothing but what any girl of my age could and should do." Then, in her own way she repeated some of Papa's theories about the good possible to do besides mere almsgiving.

"For, some wouldn't accept real money," she continued. "There's Paul Uhlman and his mother, whom I know wouldn't. Oh, Guy," and she turned to him impetuously as the contrast flashed upon her: "How happy you ought to be—tall and strong and able to go where you like—with a beautiful violin and all the lessons on it you want. How *grateful* you ought to be. Think of that poor Paul, and yet only today you said you did not try to learn, but preferred

to count the hairs on Professor Rosineau's head to the notes of your lesson."

"Who's Paul Uhlman?" said Guy, coloring, and wondering how he could possibly feel "grateful," even at her bidding, for the plague of his life, those dreadful violin lessons of "Old Rosin," as the boys called him. Whereupon Helen told them about the crippled boy, his genius for music, sole inheritance from his father and the old broken violin which he had tried to mend and teach himself to play upon.

There was a silence, which Guy was the first to break.

"Helen, see here! I never put two and two together till now. Mother never wanted to hear me play a piece when I had learned it, and Father only said: 'Robbie Stearns (that's his partner's son) is learning the violin. You shall.' I never saw any use in the old scrapy thing that I had to go up in the attic to practice. But I see it now. I'll pay attention hereafter to everything old Rosin says, and, as fast as I have learned when school is out, I'll go and teach that poor boy who hasn't any father to pay for his lessons."

"O, Guy! Guy!" cried Helen, almost breathless at the effect her words had produced.

"And this, now Paul's got a teacher, shall be the first step towards buying him a violin," said Pearl, laying her dollar on the table.

"Papa promised me a dollar, too, next week to buy a tool with," said fairhaired Willie Morgan, after a moment's hesitation, in which a temptation was struggled with and conquered. "I wish I had it now to put with Pearl's. But I tell you what I can do, if you'll give me a bit of paper I'll write down and sign it:

'When Papa gives me a dollar, as he certainly will 'cause he said so, I am going to give it to a violin.'

WILLIE MORGAN."

"Good, good, my lad," cried Helen's father, slipping into the room and a chair at that instant with the way he had among young people of making himself *one* of them. And Willie sat down by him like a little business man and signed his first "promise to pay" with Dr. Ferris' beautiful gold pencil.

"Now," said the Doctor, "when you tell your father what you intend doing with that dollar, you mustn't let him give you another to buy your tool with, because that would make it his gift to Paul and not yours, don't you see?"

"O, no Sir," answered Willie, firmly; "I made up my mind before I spoke. I've plenty of things, too, at home now to play with."

"I dare say," said the Doctor. "It's a capital thing to be an only child."

"I wish I was an only child," said Letty White from her nook in the window seat. "There are too many of us to be allowed any money since father failed, so there's nothing I can give, not a thing."

"Why, yes; you can share our gladness because Paul's going to be made so happy," replied Helen, taking her hand. Letty was a delicate child—one of eight—who grieved over fancied neglect of a mother, who was simply too busy with the little babies to dream that such a big one as Letty pined for constant demonstrations of love. So Helen was always trying to comfort and find her something to occupy herself with. "You must not feel this way," she said now, as she marked her too ready tears gathering. "Why don't you ask your mother, who has so many, to send you every day to see Mrs. Morse, who lost both her little girls last winter?"

"She sent her some books by Papa the day after you told me about her," said Letty.

"You are the best book she could send her," continued Helen. "Isn't she, Papa?"

"Yes," returned the Doctor. "A child is the first volume of what may be a very beautiful story."

"Why, then, we might start a circulating library of children," said Archie Gibbs, who always took everything literally. "So many dozen children instead of so many dozen books, and those who hadn't us could come and borrow us."

"What a droll idea," said Pearl. "The girls to be loaned to the ladies and the boys to the gentlemen?"

"No, indeed!" cried Archie. "I wouldn't be snapped up and at by any old bachelor like Uncle Jim. I prefer Aunt May. She always gives a fellow lemonade and cakes and shows him pictures and things."

"Ah, I see," laughed Helen's father. "You'd make it a sort of Mutual Benefit Association, endowing subscribers with your company, and they to return in ice-cream and candies. Now, books don't eat, you see, and we can lay them down when we wish. But, of course, I only used a figure of speech. I meant that children could teach us many things and distract our thoughts from care and throw light in dark places, as good books do."

"Well," replied Archie, "I didn't like the idea anyhow of being turned into an old musty book, to be laid on the shelf and get torn up maybe sometime, but I would like to belong to

a club as Helen said—a club with a pretty name that went to see the sick and made clothes for the poor. Can't we start one now?"

"To be sure, we can," said Dr. Ferris. "And, Archie, never mind the pretty of it's name, if your club can do pretty things—take the way 'to the house of mourning,' put by toys to employ hands in helpful deeds, and learn to prefer to the buying of the prettiest wax doll the giving of a dress or shoe or mittens to a live baby that can, like us, feel the cold, even though it has red hair and a pug nose."

"Why haven't we thought of a Children's Club before?" exclaimed Archie.

"Why haven't we? And you'll make rules and days of meeting for us, won't you, Doctor? And we'll name it the Helen Ferris Club." cried Guy. "It was all her that made us think of it."

"O—h! Lovely!" cried all the children at once, clustering around Helen—too *happy-looking* to say a word.

So that was the beginning of the Children's Club of Dimpleton, of whose doings I heard so much, and by which many besides the guests received in the end souvenirs of Helen's tenth birthday party.

Each Christmas, with its cold and snow, its shivering poor and fireless hearths, crying: "Warm us, warm us!" the club members gathered around a tree in the Ferris dining-room, answered the cry in the *sign language*, some of the letters of whose alphabet are stockings, hoods, shawls and shoes.

And Dr. Ferris told Paul Uhlman one day that in a year he would be able to walk again. And Paul profited so much by his young teacher's instructions and showed such marvelous skill on the violin—that new violin which was found by his bedside one morning without the least clue to anyone to whom a "thank you" could be spoken—that Professor Rosineau declared that sometime he should resign his position of music-teacher at the Walworth Academy in order that Paul might be appointed in his place.

"Hurrah for old Rosin!" said Guy.

"Hurrah for Guy!" said Helen.

"And hurrah for Helen!" say we all.

Now, though, you were told in the beginning of this story that Helen was her Uncle Charlie's heiress, her father did not deem it wise to tell *her* so till she was nearly thirteen years old. The knowledge of her good fortune made her feel "delightfully responsible," as she wrote in her pretty, loving letters to Uncle Charlie.

"O, how I thank you for making me your heir. I am going to build two hospitals and an asylum with the money, but I almost die to think that you would have to die beforehand. Please, please come home to spend Christmas."

But, tho' Uncle Charlie did not come, that was the happiest, busiest Christmas that had yet entered Helen's life. Something to buy for Mr. and Mrs. Everybody and their families. She gave much and received much. From Papa and friends beautiful and costly presents; from the grateful poor branches of holly, mistletoe, lichens, bird-nests and pretty colored leaves. One widow sent her only treasure—a dead child's silver school medal and in a slatted wooden box, marked on the top, bottom and sides in big capitals, "Tame," "Tame," "Tame," came not a dangerous creature, but a half-grown white chicken and crooked little note from a crooked little boy, whom Dr. Ferris had straightened as much as science could, which read:

"Please xcept, as I brot it up with grattytude, from an egg, for Doctar Ferrises little Gurl."

But of all the presents that Helen made, the selection of Miss Ruth's perplexed her most. She wanted it to be so very, very pretty and

appropriate—feeling sure that she was the only one of her Sunday-school class who meant to give the new teacher anything. At last she chose a beautiful blue and gold book: "After the Cross the Crown," and wrote in it:

"To dear Miss Ruth from her affectionate Helen." "For," she said, as she closed it, "she must want someone to love her, and I do dearly, only she hasn't made it easy for me to tell her so."

In other words and ways, that was the fault all Dimpleton found with Miss Ruth. She would not make friends—not even acquaintance with anyone since she moved there. To be sure, great disappointments and sorrows change some people just as they had Miss Ruth—make them feel and look as tho' they could never cry or laugh or love again. Such a sad, sad life as her's had been. For the last ten years her poor father a helpless invalid. And then his affairs entrusted to an untrustworthy friend—badly managed. His property being gradually mortgaged and sold until he and his daughter had been driven to make a home among strangers upon the last bit of real estate left to a once wealthy man—that tiny frame cottage in the suburbs of Dimpleton. Now, of course, it wasn't right or pretty

for proud Miss Ruth to make those "strangers," who with friendly intentions called on her in the first days feel that their visits, if repeated, would be an intrusion—that "there is nothing you can do; thank you." Fortunately, there was one—the white-haired pastor of the pretty church on the hill—who, his kind eyes used to the half light of sorrow, could see beneath the haughty manner she assumed just how it was with Miss Ruth. Wherever sickness or trouble abode he always went *unasked*, and it was thanks to his filling with church work the few hours in Miss Ruth's life, she could spare from her invalid, that as teacher and scholar she and Helen met one morning in St. Matthew's Sunday-school room.

Now, if Miss Ruth had just been as fresh and beautiful as that morning was, Helen would not have been the only one of the class who felt attracted to her. Unfortunately with young people, Beauty, like light, bursts in thro' the heart's window—the eye—while goodness and worth often enter only after long fumbling with the door key.

So, though most all the girls had heard their parents speak with sympathy and admiration of Miss Ruth, her filial devotion and lonely life—they all permitted their little half-grown

tongues to say cruel, critical things of her as they walked home after church.

"I'm sure, I can't bear her," said haughty, naughty Marian Vane. "So horrid, hateful, fady looking."

"That she is," said her dearest friend and echo.

"She sat there like a wax work in the Chamber of Horrors, except when she jumped so at Helen Ferris' name."

"I'm going to try and get transferred right away to Miss May's class."

"Well, I won't leave Miss Ruth's class because it's Helen's," said Sadie Brown timidly.

"But she does look as though she'd been frozen—so cold and white and stiff."

Sadie's words described Miss Ruth so well that Helen, overhearing, smiled, but added reprovingly and warmly: "And that's just why I feel like taking her in my arms and thawing her."

"I don't believe she'd let you," answered Marion, "though she never took her eyes off of you when you went away. She didn't look as if she liked you one bit."

"I should be very sorry to think that," said Helen. "But I mean to keep on loving her just the same and better every day, as I'm sure we all shall when we come to know her."

And though, owing to Miss Ruth's strange reserve with her, she could not feel, after seeing her every week for six months that she *knew* her any better, Helen bravely persisted in cherishing in her impulsive young heart a tender love for Miss Ruth till dear old Christmas came 'round and gave her such a pretty chance to tell on herself.

Sunday, December 25th, in Dimpleton such a lovely day. The trees frosted—the snow white and smooth—covered the ground, for it had only ceased falling at dawn. And, when the sun rose and beheld the wintry scene, he seemed bent on showing it had all been done without his leave. So he began to shine so brightly that the clouds like culprits ran away and the sky was left as blue as a summer one. The wind, due north, took the joy-notes of the bells in St. Matthew's steeple and blew them, like petals of a silver flower, all over the town. Though always in haste to return to her father, who thoughtlessly found fault with her leaving him even for a short time. Miss Ruth was the first teacher to arrive. She was just crossing the school-room to her seat when Helen entered, and, hastening forward, said:

"Oh, dear Miss Ruth, I wish you a happy Christmas, and would you accept this little offering with my love?"

"For me? For me?" Miss Ruth's lip quivered. "Oh, thank you. Did you think of me, dear?"

She took the book and held it against her side, waited a moment to regain composure that she might say more, but just then the rest of the class came in, and, with a glance that satisfied Helen better than words, she laid her gift on the table beside her and greeted the others. There was a real smile on her lips when she began the day's lesson and a little pink glow on her usually pale cheek that kept deepening till it was a bright red spot when she rose, taking a big white envelope from her reticule.

"These little cards," she said, "which I meant to give you each today, were laid an instant on the table by my father's bed and a glass of medicine was unfortunately overturned upon them. I have been unable to replace them, and I am going to offer them to you as they are, with best wishes for a happy Christmas."

She held out the envelope, adding: "Perhaps you would rather select for yourselves; they are each different and some less stained than others."

Helen stepped forward to take it, saying: "Oh, how kind," and began drawing out the

cards, while the other girls gathered around and looked over her shoulder.

"I don't need any remembrance of Miss Ruth," said scornful, deceitful Marian Vane. Then, with a little giggle under her breath: "Like that!"

Helen turned quickly and faced her. "If I am to distribute—this is yours," she said, handing her the least disfigured card of the number.

"O, thanks!" said Marian, coloring under Helen's reproving eye.

And so she proceeded until each had received one, retaining for herself the card most sadly stained of all. Then she went very close to the teacher's chair: "Miss Ruth," she commenced, in a firm, sweet voice, "let me thank you in the name of the class for your kind thought of us today. I shall always treasure this card, and more dearly for the mark upon it. It will be a double remembrance of you and of your sick father whom you have nursed so long."

Miss Ruth's black veil fell suddenly, as if by accident, and she only inclined her head in acknowledgement, but Helen still stood beside her while the rest passed out. And when she did take a step away she discovered that Miss Ruth had caught the floating ribbon of her cloak and was pressing it again and again to

her lips while the great tears, whose gathering her veil had hidden, were falling fast.

"Oh, don't kiss me that way! Oh, Miss Ruth, dear Miss Ruth, I love you! I have always loved you!" cried Helen, throwing her arms around her and kissing her, while Miss Ruth let her head be drawn to rest on Helen's shoulder, as it would never have done on that of any but a child.

So, Lily, when you wish you were grown and don't like to be called a child, as I've heard you say sometimes, remember that little hands and little feet can go into places where larger ones cannot.

All the way home Miss Ruth kept thinking how sometime, sometime, when her father was better, she could ask Helen to come and spend an afternoon with her. It would be so sweet to hear a child's voice in the lonely, silent house, and she would bring down the story-books and games, read and played with her dear, dead sister and be herself a child again, with Helen for a playmate.

Ah, little Lily, you'll never know how to value love like other precious things until you *need* it. You don't know what it is to be heart-hungry. Nobody with a *mother* does. What it is to want somebody to say: "Ah, poor

dear," and kiss the bruise when you are hurt; to wait for you and run to meet you when you come home. To want somebody, as Miss Ruth had often done, when night fell on the day's labor—nothing left undone. No matter how head, heart or hand ached, her father's favorite book read aloud till he slept, and her own prayers said, she lay on the alcove cot listening for his call until exhaustion closed her eyes. She wanted somebody to say tenderly, "You've been a good girl today!" To *love* her, to *love* as some know how to love, as most mothers know, but not always fathers. For Miss Ruth couldn't help fearing sometimes that her's could not love her—he was so selfish and exacting. But just before he died he spoke the reward of her long self-sacrifice and devotion; his paralyzed hand laid on her bowed head in benediction, where he had bidden her place it: "Ruth, I see now how sinfully impatient I have been under the trials with which God has been pleased to afflict me, and how nothing they were compared to the blessing He vouchsafed in you, my perfect daughter."

From Guy Morris, Helen first heard of Miss Ruth's bereavement. Throwing her arms around her own father's neck: "Oh, poor Miss Ruth!" she cried. "Papa, take me to her—now—now!"

There was a look of such sincere grief on Helen's face, that the honest one of the door-answerer at the cottage lit with pleasure. It was a woman whom she recognized as one of the parish poor. How often kindness and sympathy in our need are reached up to us from some warm heart beating behind the bars of a plaid calico dress!

"Come in! Come in, Miss Helen," she said, in reply to her question, "Can I see Miss Ruth?" "I'm glad enough you've come to speak a word of comfort to her," and she motioned the child to enter.

Helen never forgot that first view of the narrow, low-ceiled room. A long ray of winter sunlight had broken its way through the bowed blinds and seemed to bind together with a swinging gold-linked chain the blue-robed Madonna above the mantel and the black-robed orphan on the sofa.

Swiftly, softly, towards that sofa Helen crossed, saying again and again, as she knelt down beside it: "Oh, Miss Ruth! My own dear, dear Miss Ruth!" And filling in with sobs, the pauses, where less tender, less sincere, condolers might have put mere words. But dear Miss Ruth seemed to hear nothing. Aroused by caresses, her eyes fluttered open,

but there was no recognition in them. Helen saw that her friend was very ill—and something else she saw, too, as she bent above her, stroking the throbbing temples and the fever-flushed cheeks, ministering to her in countless loving ways—something else she saw—a big gold locket gleaming against Miss Ruth's white throat through her loosened dress—a heart-shaped locket, set with rubies, from which, as from a window found open in Miss Ruth's heart, looked out Uncle Charlie's face.

There were several pages to the letter which Helen's father despatched that night to Florida. to say nothing of Helen's royal mandate of a postscript:

"Uncle Charlie, dear Uncle Charlie, as soon as this reaches you come, come, come."

"By Saturday," she said, "by Saturday. Papa, he will be here in time for a glad, glad Easter with us, if only—but say, O say, Papa, it won't be too late for Miss Ruth?"

For you must know that all the while that summons was on its way South and Uncle Charlie on his way home, Miss Ruth's life had been a thing to be prayed for. From hour to hour the Doctor could not tell how soon she might fly away from them over "the great

dividing wall of jasper," as he called death. But at last there came a night when, with the light of restored reason in her eyes, she looked wonderingly into those of her tender watchers.

"O, why did you come? Why did you bring me back to life?" she cried suddenly, remembering all, beneath the gaze of those dark eyes of Uncle Charlie's brother, while one hand felt for the locket on her neck, and unconsciously turned it face downwards. "How is it you are here? I did not send for Dr. Ferris?"

"No, nor for any other doctor," he told her gently. Nor was it as Dr. Ferris he was there, but as Helen's father, brought there by Helen and bidden to stay there by Helen and try with God's help, to preserve her dear Miss Ruth to those who loved her." With which comforting words he held a soothing draught to her quivering lips, and a little while after, listening to her breathing as she lay sweetly sleeping with Helen's hand in hers, the Doctor knew that the danger, the crisis, was past—that the brother-physician whom he had called into Miss Ruth's case would not arrive too late.

It was Easter Eve, and Helen was *so* happy. Was not that the day Uncle Charlie—but. hush—not a word Papa had said. not a word to anyone till he was at the door. Helen circled

about the room strangely busy with its every detail, each moment glancing towards the bed. But if Miss Ruth divined the joyful surprise they had planned for her she gave no sign. pale and still she lay with folded hands—so still that Helen fancied at length she slept. “And when she wakes,” murmured the child, —stealing out to the front door—“when she wakes?” For, was not every instant bringing nearer the coming-home time of somebody whom Papa had gone to the depot to meet? And wasn’t that old Nick coming down the road now—and wasn’t that Uncle Charlie—but very different-looking from his picture—who was making ready to spring out the moment the carriage stopped? Helen flew down to him. “Helen dear, dear,” he said, huskily, kissing her fondly. And then he looked beyond her. O it had been so long since Uncle Charlie had seen that little brown-eyed lady, you remember, whom he loved dearly, dearly, and who loved him dearly, dearly, and now at last there rose between them only that cottage door.

“This way,” whispered Helen, smiling, and leaving that door wide open, she ran in ahead.

“Miss Ruth,” she cried, “Uncle Charlie, Uncle Charlie is here!” And there he was, on his knees by the bed, sobbing, “My love, my

lost, found love, my Ruth!" while Helen stole from the room.

The day had come, the glad, glad Easter morning. The long night of fasting and tears was over. Her heart throbbing with joy, hope, love and life, Miss Ruth listened to the pealing bells. It was truly wonderful how rapidly, under her *new* Doctor's care, the dear patient improved. The first afternoon she was able to sit up in the big chair by the window, she called Helen to her, and hiding her face in the child's golden hair, whispered something that made Helen utter a cry of delight.

"O how lovely! How lovely! Yes, indeed, Uncle Charlie knows best, because then we can take you away, right away, from this little, lonely old house, home to ours. How can we even wait till Wednesday. But," she hesitated, "the dress, Aunt Ruth, a beautiful white dress with a train and orange blossoms—can we get one ready in just three days?" And Miss Ruth answered, after a moment's smiling thoughtfulness——

"Well, I had forgotten that part of the wedding, but since Uncle Charlie will give us no longer, we must arrange it some way. Go up in the attic, Helen, and you will find there an old oak chest. It holds all that is left of our

better, happier days, the young days when Uncle Charlie and I first knew each other. Look in it, dear, and bring down what you like best. You are to be the bridesmaid. Only, instead of my choosing you a dress, you must find one for the bride."

You can't imagine what a happy time up in the attic Helen and that old chest had together. Tenderly handling, she turned over its faintly fragrant contents. Blue and rose-colored satin slippers that had danced away their short lives; faded silk and frayed gauze party dresses, bits of ribbon, velvet, lace. And among the others she found *the* dress—a cream embroidered muslin, handiwork of the nuns of some old French convent. Many a pure and sweet thought of the patient Sisters seemed interwoven with the morning-glories and lilies-of-the-valley that overgrew its filmy surface. Yes, that was the wedding dress, and for the veil—that rich old white lace shawl. Could anything be more exquisite for all its time-yellowness? And there, too, in a rosewood casket lay carved ivory prayer-book that Miss Ruth had carried for her first communion. Kneeling by the oaken chest, full of Miss Ruth's happy past, Helen said a prayer for her happy future.

The wedding-day dawned fair, smiling. Up with the sun, Helen flitted like a white butterfly about the conservatory, gathering every flower wise enough to be abloom in honor of that morning. Quite concealed beneath great baskets of cut blossoms, potted plants around her, she was then driven out to the cottage and left to make the little parlor there look pretty enough for a wedding. Through the lifted windows the fresh April air came vaulting, tumbling in, sweet with memories of the violets it had met and talked to on the way. Streams of sunshine fell like showers of golden rain and lay in pools of light on the floor. The wedding presents were already arranged on a table in one corner. You've no idea how many people in Dimpleton jumped up and sent a gift to Uncle Charlie's bride. Helen's was a rare little bronze urn from Pompeii which Papa had always promised her when she should be grown—a miniature of those in which the Greeks and Romans preserved the ashes of their dead. And Helen had filled it with ashes, too—the ashes of that will of Uncle Charlie's, making her his heiress, and which the morning after his return she had burned on the library hearth. Uncle Charlie and all he had belonged to Miss Ruth now.

But that cottage parlor, how pretty, indeed, Helen made it look! The picture over the mantel had a great bunch of lilies either side, and its tarnished gold frame, green enameled with smilax. The curtains she looped back with white rose-branches, the tall Grandfather clock by the hall door had a wreath fastened on top like a Paris bonnet and tied under its chin with striped-grass strings till it looked for all the world like a Grandmother clock, with a positive seimper on its time-marked face.

The rest of the flowers Helen used to garland a big red velvet armchair, placed in the middle of the floor, with the hydrangeas and taller plants in a half circle around it. When it was finished, with its head-rest of white and purple pansies, its footstool of white rosebuds and its canopy of cool, green, waving palms, it seemed, indeed, a throne fit for a queen, and there was nothing for Uncle Charlie to do but to take Miss Ruth in his strong, loving arms, carry her down-stairs and enthrone her there. And how beautiful she looked, laying back against her heartsease pillow, the oval face framed in soft brown hair and time-yellow lace. How beautiful with happiness Miss Ruth had grown! When Father Fenwick came, his children's joy reflected in his paternal countenance,

the Ferris servants gathered in the doorway. Miss Ruth's bridesmaid took her place on one side of the bride's chair, Uncle Charlie and his brother on the other, and the dear priest began the marriage service.

"Papa," said Helen, as she kissed him "good-night, "O how I wish this had been some world-holiday. Christmas or Easter and not just a joy-day all to ourselves!"

"Dear child," answered Papa, "Every heart over which shines the guiding Star of Faith is a lowly Bethlehem, where the dear Lord's coming makes a Christ-birth many times a year. More precious to Him than the tribute the Magi brought that night centuries ago, is our daily offering of love, devotion and acts of self-sacrifice and charity. The soul, with its triumphs over sin and temptation—its awakenings and arisings, often has its 'Easter mornings.' Yes, Helen, yes. If we *will*, we *can* make each day a holy day for ourselves and a *Thanksgiving Day for those around us.*"

As Alice closed the book, she repeated its last words several times, musingly: "If we *will* we *can* make each day a holy day for ourselves and a Thanksgiving Day for those around us."

"What a lovely story, and it may be all true! This child Helen to do so much, and I never did anything."

The first light was breaking.

"I see," she cried aloud, suddenly clasping her hands, and sinking back among the hammock cushions, "I see now, there is a great deal one can do with their money and their time, a great deal beside what we do with ours. 'A Thanksgiving Day for those around us.' I always meant to send Ida a beautiful present next Christmas, but I want to do something for somebody *now—now!*"

Far in the distance dreamed the "sleeping kings" of mountains, down the winding country road the faithful were beginning to return from church, some afoot, some in their canvas-top wagons. One of the latter stopped at the gate, and thence Joe Burton lifted out first Ida, then Miss Milly, lingering for a few last words with them, while young Jim held the reins. How patient Burton's face was! How cheerfully he toiled from morning till night, and his boy, so handsome and delicate-looking, unfit for farm work, with his heart away at school.

If they could only find that "buried money."

Ah! Why couldn't she—why shouldn't she? It is the first step that costs.

Alice Goldweight legally, morally, came of age on her eighteenth birthday that Sunday morning—reading under the elms of “Cherrydale.”

“Ida!” Alice bent over the invalid’s chair; “I wish to thank you again and again for the book and the flowers, the note and all the rest. Now, tell me, dear, what you would like best in the world for a present next Christmas? I don’t mean to let you forget me when I’m gone.”

“O dear,” cried Ida, “I could never do that. If you’d write and tell me you were well, that would give me great delight. But if you really wish to send me something else that I want dreadfully, why that would be some school books for Jim Burton and a black shawl for Aunt Milly.”

“But neither of those things would be a present for you, Ida,” said Alice.

“O but they would be the best kind of a present. What greater pleasure can come to anyone than to see those they love happy? Now, since I have these new crutches I can’t think of anything I need, Miss Alice.”

“Not *Miss Alice*,” whispered Mrs. Goldweight’s daughter, with her arms around Ida; “Just ‘Alice’ hereafter, always, dear, ‘Alice.’ your friend!”

CHAPTER VIII.

BURIED TREASURE.

"In the close limit that confines
Our getting and our giving,"
Unless we read between the lines
What should we do with living?

Her long, light hair unbound, robed in one of those exquisite white French lawn *peignons* so elaborate with tiny tucks and ruffles that Ida had once sorrowfully declared "must be such an awful trouble for anybody to iron," Alice, alone in her room at last, glided noiselessly nither and thither, every one else in the house was asleep, but she was busy, *very* busy.

Taking a pocketbook from the bureau drawer, where she had carelessly tossed it some days previous, she drew forth the crisp, new hundred-dollar bills which filled it—one in each of the six compartments, and made a roll of them.

"Why, no," she exclaimed suddenly, "We couldn't lay these in the ground this way. They'd get all wet and muddy. I'll put them back. Jim will need a pocketbook, of course,

and he shall have it, too. It's such a pretty one, I didn't notice before how pretty!"

She glanced admiringly at the green Levant leather, with its silver corners, but she did *not* see that engraved in tiny script on one of those corners was the name "Alice Goldweight."

It was the poor child's first step on the highway. She had blindly thrown her heart and soul into the plan and wished to leave nothing undone to make perfect its accomplishment. The gifts that *she* had been in the habit of bestowing and receiving were always elegantly encased. So she wrapped the pocketbook carefully in one of her dainty Valenciennes-edged handkerchiefs, and tied it with broad blue satin ribbon in a butterfly bow. Then she was content. The treasure which "Hannah" buried so many years ago could not have looked one bit more attractive, surely. Now, she had done her part. "Tim," she would ask "Tim" to do the rest."

When Kathie told her father next morning that Miss Alice would be liking to see him a minute sometime that day, the Colonel's gardener threw down his rake. "Sure, I'll be goin' this same minute," said he. "It's not for a lady to be waitin' my leisure," and he went.

Alice ceased speaking. After Tim stood looking at the package she had handed him with a puzzled expression on his open face.

"Don't you think you can fix it for me easily, Tim?" she asked.

Then he found his voice.

"Indade can't I?" he cried. "Indade, can't I? It's aisier than to say a prayer. But it was of Mr. Burton's joy I was thinkin' and of the honor that'll be yours in the next world for so good an act in this. It's few of them that *can*, who *do*, Miss, and he wants so much to send that fine boy of his to school. Can I fix it, indade? He's been askin' me to graft one of his pear trees with a slip of the Colonel's quince, and tomorrow I'll be goin' to do that. But tonight there's a full moon and by its light I'll be buryin' *this* under a pear tree in the orchard that I'll mark with a cross. As it's too fine to lay in the dirt, I'll pack it first snug and tight in a rusty tin can that I know of, and tomorrow when we're in the orchard I'll just carelessly toss it up out of the ground when I'm diggin' and then take meself off immediately, and leave him alone to find it. And in the ould, rusty can, of course, he'll be thinkin' it's the same treasure that his Hannah buried in that ould tin can."

"That's what we want," cried Alice. "I wouldn't have him think that *I* had anything to do with it, for the world."

"No, Miss," said Tim blissfully. "He'll never have a suspicion of aither of us. Why should he? But it's God that will be knowing it, and blessing you forever."

Tomorrow—the news spread thro' the village—tomorrow Miss Milly's rich folk boarders were to depart on the first train, with the Colonel's son to drive them to the station.

"Are they?" said Joe Burton, regretfully. "Well, I reckon I'd better go right over and say good-bye to her."

"Good evenin', Miss Alice, they tell me you're goin' away," said he bravely; then, hesitating, he awkwardly twisted the stems of the huge bouquet he carried. "I ain't never had time or room to grow flowers on our place," he proceeded, "but my Hannah that's been dead—it was eight years last August—she was mighty fond of 'em, and she planted a lot of every kind under a winder; but all the others naturally died away since she did except these here zinnas. They're hardy and sort of grows of themselves. Jim and me picked 'em for you. And," lowering his voice, "he's going to school in the city next week.. *I found the buried*

money—that is, Tim turned it up for me. 'Twas the strangest thing, the blessedest thing—and I thank you, I'd mean I come over to say 'good-bye.' We poor folks have to leave the Lord to pay our debts, and He'll not forget what's owin' *you*."

Mrs. Goldweight met Alice hastening up to her room with flushed cheek carrying the flowers. "Where did you get those ugly things?" she asked. "Mr. Burton brought them to you? You mean that ignorant old red-handed farmer? The idea! Throw them out the window. They're horrid weeds."

"No, Mamma," replied Alice gravely, "they are "zinnas," he told me, and I'm going to put them in water. They're all he had, and Ida says it isn't the value of the gift, but the act of giving, that counts."

"How ridiculous!" exclaimed Mrs. Goldweight. "Thank goodness we're going home. You are utterly ruined."

Late that night Ida, lying wakeful, saw her door softly open and Alice gliding in, knelt beside the bed. The real parting between the girls took place then, but there was a last embrace next morning with mingling tears.

"Alice, Alice, are you *never* coming down? Mr. Ergood is here with the carriage." Mrs.

Goldweight's voice was unusually sharp. Alice paused once more on the threshold.

"Good-bye again," she sobbed. "It may be a long time, but some day I'll come back, dear, come back here—to—you!"

As the Ergood carriage rounded the creek, Myra Page standing by her window looked sullenly after it. "There go Miss Milly's boarders, Mamma," she said. "Mrs. Goldweight told me when I sang for her that I could make my fortune up in the city. If it wasn't for leaving you here all alone I'd go and try, anyway. If I was successful I'd come back and tell you. If I wasn't, I'd die there without letting you know. I'm so miserable here. I hate to see that Ergood carriage and I hate 'The Pines!' O, Mamma, sometimes I feel as if I'd have to run away!"

Mrs. Page drew the dark, pretty head upon her shoulder. "You will not need to 'run,' darling," she said, tenderly, "That *would* break my heart. You can start out with my blessing as soon as we have saved a little more money. But, Myra, home-staying hearts are happiest, and Mamma's afraid her ambitious little girl will wake to find it so some day. God gave you a beautiful voice, but you should be satisfied with simply using it to sing His

praises. Worldly triumphs and successes are as naught. Our life's duties are fulfilled when we have loved our dear Lord with all our soul and our neighbor as ourselves for love of Him."

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CHAPTER IX.

FAREWELLS.

"Howe'er it be, it seems to me
'Tis only noble to be good.
Kind hearts are more than coronets,
And simple faith than Norman blood."

As Tim, with an old army knapsack swung over his shoulder, and unutterable sadness on his face, came slowly down the curving driveway of "The Pines" a handful of hiding autumn leaves that the wind had found somewhere blew tauntingly across his path. From force of habit he paused; an instant more, and he would have returned for his rake. Then he remembered—the walks might be heaped with leaf-drifts—the tea roses yonder might droop and die—the box hedge grow unshapely for want of daily care—He, Tim O'Connor, would never tend them more. He was no longer the Colonel's gardener.

"It was a fine place," he murmured, glancing 'round him, "and there comes old Spotty to give my heart a last tug. Back, sir, go back! Go back!"

Being finally reluctantly obeyed, Tim closed the great iron gates upon the whining, bounding dog, and reaching his hand thro' the bars tenderly caressed him. "Good-bye old fellow," said he, softly. "Good-bye. I'm holding no hate in my heart against the master for all his cruel words, the curse that he spoke in the white heat of his anger. He may scorn my girl, but Master Roy would seek through the world till doomsday, a sweeter, truer wife he'd never find. But I'm not upholding a son's disobedience. If I'd dreamed of such a thing I'd never have consented to it. But now that it's done, sure my Kathie is good enough for anybody. He's an illigant soldier, the Colonel, an illigant soldier and a born gentleman, but, ah, he's no Christian—and he'd better be *that* than all the rest."

As he passed through the village bidding "farewells" Tim found that the news of young Ergood's marriage had reached every house but "Cherrydale." There he saw only Monica; Miss Milly was out, and Ida confined to her room. At the Page cottage its gentle mistress was in the garden shielding with papers some tender plants from a threatened frost.

"Good evenin', Ma'am," said he. "Would you be allowin' me to come in and do that for

you. It's a free man I am now" (opening the gate, before she could reply), "I'm no longer the Colonel's gardener; I'm on my way to the city. But there's some hours yet, and if there's anything I could do about the garden—things that Pete don't understand, it's glad I'd be to show him now. It's often I've wished to do that same, for my heart went out to you, Ma'am, thinkin' of your livin' alone here and widowed with only sweet words on your lips. Sure, anyone could read the message of forgiveness on your face as plain as they can there." And he pointed to a heart-shaped flower-bed which Mrs. Page had fashioned on the left of the door, in which white and purple violets traced the word "peace."

"Hush, Monica, hush; I know; I've heard it." Miss Milly's hands trembled as she unpinned her shawl, her gray hair was wind-tossed, a faint flush on her cheek; "But Ida mustn't know till she's better."

"O," cried Monica, despairingly, "Miss Ida done rang for me just after Tim went, and I done tole it to her."

"What did she say?" Miss Milly crossed swiftly towards the door.

"Bless de chile, she ain't say nuffin'," replied Monica. "She jus' lays back an' shet her eyes like she goin' ter sleep."

"Ida, child, child!" whispered Aunt Milly, drawing the girl into her arms. "I wouldn't have let you know till you were stronger."

"Oh, Aunt, darling, it's all for the best." The reed-like voice was very sweet and firm:

"I've been thinking it over. He might have married a great, rich lady. Sometimes I hoped it would be Alice. She was very fond of him, but she did not understand him as Kathie does. She grew up with him, as I did. She loved him from a child. You remember how she often used to kiss my hands just because they'd helped him that time in the water? So I know she'll never vex him or say a harsh word to him. She'll help him fight the world up there in the city, as he'll have to now without his father's money, and she'll have a soft touch for every bruise and every wound that he'll get in the fight. O, Aunt Milly, don't *you* cry. He was so far, far above *me*. I knew he could never give me back my love, but I couldn't help it. It was always Roy I thought of when I looked at the mountains."

"I know," sobbed Miss Milly, with a closer clasp. "There was a mountain in my life once, years ago, when I was your age. Your father went to school with him. He was tall and noble-looking and far above us. No one in

the world was good enough for him, and I prayed the sun might always rest on his head and crown him, as it does the mountains. But I'm not like you, dear. I'm selfish and narrow. I never told a human soul till this night, but, O child, child, it's been the comfort of my life that—*my mountain*—Doctor Wingfield, never married anybody!"

CHAPTER X.

GRANDPA TIM.

"Home they brought her warrior dead. * * *
Sweet, my child, I live for thee!"

"A tiny house with the shadow of a church falling over it—St. Anthony's, at the corner—a box of mignonette in every window and a wee yard in front for baby and other flowers to grow in,"—so Kathie had described her abode, and Tim felt sure he could never pass the "walls that held them without knowing." And he did not. He paused as he neared it, looking wistfully up at the closed windows with their rims of inward light. Then he raised his arms, as one bestowing blessing. and, turning, ascended the snow-mantled steps of the parsonage and rang.

The universality of a pastor's friendship and sympathy is one of the most precious attributes of his calling.

"It's a stranger, Father," said Father Brady's housekeeper, after comfortably seating Tim before the prattling fire in the parlor. "A stranger, and in trouble, I think."

Father Brady closed his book and hastened down the stairs, throwing all his heart into his warm, cheery greeting.

"Father," began Tim, "I've come to leave a message with you. You know Kathie Ergood that lives next-door but one, here?"

"Yes, I know her well, and a dear soul she is," answered the Priest.

"As her mother was before her," proceeded Tim. "There'll be no purgatory for such as them, sure, with niver a thought of sin upon them. It's an old sayin'—a true, good daughter makes a true, good wife, and if ever there was a good daughter my Kathie was."

"Ah," cried the Priest. "We'll shake hands again. I'm happy to meet you. Mrs. Ergood's father. She's often spoken of you."

"Has she now?" said Tim, huskily. "Bless her loyal heart. Yes, it's Kathie's father that I am, but you'll be keepin' my comin' as secret as a confession. You see, she married a *gintleman's* son—a born gentleman, and from the day she put her hand in his I've never looked upon her, though she's writen me faithful, and every letter askin' me to come. And, sometimes, Father, at Christmas and these holiday nights, sure, the keepin' away from comin' has been almost the killin' of me. But I've lived it

all through, and I'm stronger now since I've seen outside the house that holds her. No, Father, I haven't, and I will not, and you'll not try to break me down. It's better so. Master Roy may be a different man now he's Kathie's husband, but it would be an effort for him, a born gentleman's son, to be callin' his ould gardener 'Father,' as Kathie would be wantin' him to. She had the fine convent schoolin' and profited by ivery lesson that she learned, but it wouldn't be the likes of me that her new friends would be glad to take the hand of, I'm thinking. No, no, it's better, better as it is. I've a nice place on Governor Wilmot's estate, and ivery dollar I've earned in my life is laid by for my Kathie. And that's what I was wishin' to tell you. She's writtin that Master Roy isn't doin' much with his business—just livin' from day to day and niver the hope of a bit of help from his father, the unforgivingest man that ever lived, but an illigant soldier. So long as they're all together I make meself content sendin' the boy toys and readin' over that they're well; but if anything happens, if ever there's need of me, I want to be tould, You'll take down me name, Father—'Timothy O'Connor, Rose-moor, Anne Arundel County, Maryland—and as it's first to you they'll run

in any trouble, you'll be gettin' me word the same day without her knowin', and then I'll be comin' by noon or by night—I'll be comin' to my Kathie."

"O'Connor," said the priest at parting, "I always knew that Roy Ergood was specially blest in his wife and child, but Kate Ergood is still more fortunate in being the daughter of such a father. You are worthily named 'Timothy,' after St. Paul's 'dear son in the faith,' who laid down his life for his flock."

Death came to Roy suddenly, we may hope painlessly, one April morning on the way to his dingy little law office. Pressing his hand to his heart, he sank back into the arms of pitying bystanders. So they bore her "dead warrior" home to Katie, and through all the long hours she lay beside his taper-circled bier and wept. Near midnight Tim arrived.

"It's Father!" That was all he said, but he lifted her as though she had been a shadow of grief, not its sad reality, and laying her across his lap fitted her brown head into the old child-place on his shoulder, held her close against his great heart, filled to breaking with love and sympathy, and wept with and for his widowed daughter as only a parent can.

"Katie Mavourneen," he sobbed at length, "You'll be seein' him again and lookin' in his face as I'm lookin' in yours, with the yearnin' of years satisfied. And there's much that's left you yet, sure—*there's the boy.*"

She sprang up. In a whole day she had not thought of her child.

"Come, father," she said, "You have never seen him."

They found the boy sleeping in his little crib in the spare room, carried there by one of the neighbors—a sad-eyed woman in black, who was sitting by him.

"I kissed him 'good night' for you," she whispered to Katie, as she passed out. "My dear, a great sorrow has befallen you, but you can't be all alone, while you have him, take a mother's word for it. My little boy died last year."

Tim had thought he could walk to the ends of the earth on his knees to hear Katie's boy call him "Grandpa." But now on his knees beside the crib, he offered in his sublime humility to forego that joy.

"Sure, you mustn't be tachin' him when he wakes to call me "Grandpa," he whispered, "with his other grandfather, the Colonel, still livin' a born gentleman and so different from the likes of me."

"Father," said Katie, with a girlish flash of her tear-drained eyes, "Grandpa was one of the first words I taught him, but it wasn't the Colonel I meant him to call so. He shall never hear *his* name, never. Are you forgetting how harsh he was with——him?"

CHAPTER XI.

A JOURNEY.

"The kerchiefs waving from the pier,
The cloudy pillar gliding o'er him,
The deep blue desert, lone and drear,
With Heaven above, and home before him."

When the time came for Katie to leave the tiny house in the shadow of St. Anthony's, where she had known her greatest joys and sorrows, Father Brady and Tim between them found for her a pretty "flat" in a house so full of other people that she could not feel lonesome at night. And, when she was safely installed there with the boy and all her other household idols, Tim left her faintly smiling at his promise to come up and spend every Sunday "at home."

"There'll be sunshine sifting through the clouds, Katie," said he. "There's many a long year of hard work in my right arm yet and enough already saved up and put to your account in the Erstwhile Bank. Here's the bank-book, darlint. You'll be kapin' it now. Little I'm nadin' except at Christmas to buy the boy somethin', and then you'll lend it to me."

So months merged into years—the happiest in old Tim's life. If he saw any shades falling

across his path, he kept their presence to himself. But Roy noticed that his grandfather clung tightly to his hand when they crossed streets in their walks and sometimes stumbled coming up the stairs.

"Ould eyes are not the best in the world to see by and the sun hurts them," he replied to the lad's questions. "But so long as I can see your blessed face and the mother's, I nade not be lookin' for the sun, or at it."

When Tim announced his intention to take a trip back to Ireland, Roy's protests almost broke his resolution. "But I must be goin', Katie, darlint," said he. "It's long I've wisht to see the jittle church in Glengarry where your mother and I were married. And now I've met a friend from the ould country who'll be my partner on the journey. You won't be nadin' me here, I'm thinkin'; I've got a long lave from my place. You see, dear, I'm an ould man now, and there's no knowin' when God may be rememberin' me, and maybe the goin' away for a while will make Roy grow up to do without me, for," with a joyful laugh, "as it is now, I fear the blessed boy would be missin' me sore."

When all Katie's objections had been tenderly answered or put aside, she resignedly set about the preparations incident to departure.

"The trip will do him good," she thought, "and it's the first holiday that father ever took."

As the moment of separation approached, Tim drew Roy into his arms. "Now," said he, stroking the child's long, golden curls, "I'll not lave word with you to be a good boy whilst I'm gone, for you're that already, and God always blesses a good boy and makes a good man of him. But I'll be tellin' you some other things. There's fine blood in your veins, dearie. Your father was a born gintleman, and you'll be one in more than the name—a gentleman to the soul. You'll be brave and true to yourself and your word. Your promise to do anything will bind you like a chain cable. You'll niver strike a boy that's smaller than yourself, and if there's a body weak and nadin' a defender you'll be lendin' them your arm if their cause is right, and you'll make a stouter fight for your friend than you would for yourself.

"You'll be obligin' to them that are feeble and ould, Roy. There's little in an ould person's life so refreshin' as a bit of attintion from the young. A kind-spoken word in a child's voice will be cheerin' them all day. For ould folks are lonely and sad sometimes, especially when they've lived so long that they feel they

may be just a burden—a helpless burden—on them they love. Be a good friend to everybody and an inimy to none. Niver let a black seed of hate fall into your heart, but kape it always bloomin' with the roses and lilies of love and everlastin' peace. Let it be as aisy for you to forgive a wrong act that may be done against you as it will be to pay it back with a good one. As you grow older, your mother'll be lanin' on your young arm heavier and heavïer. Stand between her and the world, Roy, and trouble. Work for her and cherish her and you'll niver have a thought a grief or a joy but will be sweeter for sharin' it with her. Let there be nothin' you wouldn't forego, no pain you wouldn't suffer, no danger you wouldn't meet, no deed you wouldn't dare, so it were asked you in your mother's name. Don't be grievin' after Gran'pa, it will be worryin' her. We'll see one another again some day, if not in this world, why thin in the next. Ah, Roy, Roy, if you're goin' to cry this way, why, sure, why wouldn't I be cryin' with you—the very heart of my heart that I'm sayin'—good-bye—to."

Tim sailed in April, and with the exception of some lines not in his writing, from Queens-

town, announcing his safe arrival, joy at re-seeing his native land and love for those he left behind, they heard from him no more. While Roy counted everything from the time "Gran'pa went away to the time Gran'pa would come back," Katie grieved in secret over the inexplicable silence. At last the fear, the belief, forced itself upon her that he was dead.

"Sorrow is a grace," says Bishop Faber, "but we all know it is quite the hardest one, next to illness, the hardest of all God's graces, to use rightly."

The day the Erstwhile Bank failed Katie strove to see in Tim's supposed death a special act of Providence for him.

"You won't be grieving up there in Heaven where you are," she murmured. "It would have been the breaking of your heart to come home and find everything lost, and you'd have tried to work again. It's better so, father, better so. I'm young and strong, and while I can hold a needle I can earn enough for the two of us."

So Katie left the pretty flat for third-floor rooms whose greatest advantage was the smallness of rent. But, if deprived of many other things, she was not of Father Brady's visits,

counsel and helpfulness. He found a number of churches besides his own in need of new altar clothes, because Katie was such an exquisite embroideress.

CHAPTER XII.

AN ADVENTURE.

"If a child might bring the joy of a child,
And give it to us today,
What glory of gem, or what weight of gold,
Would we think too precious to pay?"

Roy was a sturdy lad now, giving promise of attaining Tim's six feet two, already very tall for his age, but impatient to be taller, in order that his mother might take his arm instead of his hand when they walked together. Tim had pronounced him the other self of his father, adding once in a whisper to Katie that there was a hint of the firm old Colonel in the curve of cheek and chin and the fine soldierly poise of the graceful head. "He's a gentleman's son, and that's far enough back to go for all his fineness," replied the mother. He had always been remarkably precocious—mind and body ran a race in growing—and the mind won. But for all his matureness and strength of character, Roy was a natural boy—not one of the "little old men" kind. He slipped into mischief at school or at play, though his pranks were innocent; he fought petty battles with

those of his own size; he played ball and marbles, and his pockets held a marvellous variety of things. With keen observation and sense of humor he laughed at all that was amusing; he cried, too, sometimes in his mother's arms when lower or coarse natures with whom life brought him in contact had wounded his fine, exalted one. His great blue eyes glowed at the recital of a brave or noble deed and flashed indignantly at a wrong or unjust one. He had his fears, his hopes, his fancies. One of the latter was that the possession of a little sister would have made him just fourteen times happier than he was, but his greatest longing would be satisfied by Gran'pa's return, and, in being big and strong and man enough to take care of his mother "all by himself."

"Mamma," said he one day, closing the door softly behind him and crossing the room on tiptoe. (He had been told long before that there was a lady very ill on the floor below, and had remembered it in every word and step thereafter.) "Mamma, how soon will it be before I can earn something? I'm a big boy now, and we don't have everything just the same now as before Gran'pa went. Isn't it because we don't have as much money as we used to have?"

Katie stitched away rapidly for a moment. "We have everything we need," she answered. "Too many have less, and I want you to keep at school and learn while you can."

"Yes, but they're things I might do between whiles," persisted Roy. "Running errands and holding horses. Bert Wilcox, across the street, often earns a dollar a week that way. You said it cost too much to have your photograph taken the other day when I wanted you to, and when I asked how much, you said 'bout 'three dollars,' you remember? Well, if I could get three dollars easy, wouldn't you have it done for me? I want it. Bert Wilcox has a great big picture of his mother in the parlor, and she isn't a bit beautiful like you. If you were hanging up there I'd see you all the time you were out, and Gran'pa would be so delighted, I know, when he gets back. Please, may I try, Mamma, please?"

"Some day, darling, some day," said Mamma, hiding her face on "darling's" shoulder.

A few weeks later he rushed in breathless. "Now," he panted, "now you can have the picture taken pretty soon, Mamma. As I was coming by the City Hall a gentleman drove up and asked me could I hold his horse a minute for him.

"He won't hurt you," he said, "he's gentle as a girl; but some mischievous person might tease or frighten him."

And I lifted my cap and said 'Yes, Sir!' Wasn't that right? And then he went in, and pretty soon he came out and handed me—this—and Roy held up a new half dollar. "He was a nice gentleman, too, Mamma. He asked me my name and if my Papa was living, and, when I answered 'no, only my Mamma and Gran'pa and he was away now,' he told me I was the man of the family. Wasn't that fine? And he said his name was Mr. Lawrence, and he hoped he'd see me again. He'd be coming there on business about the same hour all this week, and if I liked I should hold his horse for him every time. Just think, in six times I'll have three dollars. My, it seems too bad to be paid for such fun-work as holding a dear old horse. Mustn't I give this back to him, Mamma, tomorrow? Didn't he give me too much?"

"To be sure he did, but he meant you to keep it dear," said Katie. "The world is full of kind people, and I hope my boy will always fall among them. Now, come into the other room. I have a surprise for you,"—and, opening the door, she stood aside. Sitting in the middle of the floor, playing with a broken doll,

was a lovely child. Her black eyes were very large and expressive, and when she saw Roy a smile came into them that slipped slowly down till it settled among the dimples of her rosebud mouth. Drawing some of her ringlets over her face, she peeped shyly through their ebony strands.

"Goo," she said, sweetly, "Goo, boy."

Roy stood irresolute.

"Mamma," he whispered, "is she ours to keep?"

"She is ours for the present," replied Katie.

He rushed forward, and, falling on one knee with the grace of a young knight, he kissed the little lady's hand, and the little lady herself kissed him.

Then, in response to Roy's eager questioning, Katie told him how in the baby's sick mother on the floor below she had found her school-mate, Myra Page, whose proud, broken heart she had relieved of its anxiety by promising to care for Nellie as long as she could.

"For, Katie," the dying woman had said, "I never let my mother know I was unhappy and unsuccessful here in my new life, which I chose against her wish and wiser counsel. I had made my own bed, and I resolved at least to lie silently in it. But never until I was myself a

mother, did I realize how often, how cruelly I must have grieved her—the one in all the world whose love was truest, best. Keep the knowledge of my death from her as long as you can. She is very feeble and worn. The baby's care would be a heavy charge upon her."

"So it would, so it would; we need never let her know," cried Roy, joyously. "O, but I'm happy now. Nellie shall be my own little sister. I can work for her and play with her and give her more than half of everything that's mine. She shall be ours for always, Mamma."

Katie smiled sadly. "Nothing in this life can be ours for always, dear, but we'll keep her as long as we can."

Poor Katie from dawn to dusk bent above her needlework had long since begun to feel that the strength on which she so bravely counted to earn enough for two was failing fast, and if her burden already overtaxed her, the adoption of Nellie surely did not lighten it. It was nursing her with a mother's self-forgetful devotion through a childish illness that she contracted her own fatal one. "But it's all peace and rest now," she murmured to Father Brady at the last, with girlhood's smile lighting her grief-aged face. "Hush, Roy, my darling,

hush. Something tells me there'll be kind hands reached out to you, and you must not be sorrowing. Be glad that I'm going to see your father, dear, and live so that with God's grace some day you'll come to meet us both."

CHAPTER XIII.

THROUGH THE SHADOWS.

*"For thy pretty tongue, far sweeter rung,
Than coined gold, and fee,
And ever the while, thy waking smile,
It was right fair to see."*

Mr. Lawrence was the kindest of employers, adjusting the office duties to Roy's shoulders and giving the young orphan, so bravely striving to bear his loss, every evidence of sympathy. And there was Baby Nellie left, too. How Roy longed to keep always in reach the little sister whose caresses brought him such consolation.

"Grandpa can't stay away much longer than next Easter," he had said to Father Brady. "And when he comes, he'll help me to take care of her. Mrs. Maguire is good to her, and lets me pay for it out of my wages, you know. But, if Grandpa shouldn't come, why then—I'll carry her down to her grandmother, as Mamma told me to. She may stay a little longer, mayn't she, Father?"

"Agreed," said Father Brady. "And we'll shake hands on it."

Easter Eve, Roy took a long walk to the depot and watched several trains arrive, but Grandpa did not come. The last gleam of hope went out as he turned sadly away. "I'll have to give her up, as I promised," murmured the little man, resolutely. "But, oh, I wonder what I'll do after she isn't there to run and meet me nights when I come home from the office?"

It was not Nellie, however, who met him *that* evening when he entered—it was Mrs. Maguire, with her voice shrilly raised in anger and her hands full of porcelain fragments. "See my beautiful parlor vase that stood yonder on the table," she cried, "And it's not her first and it won't be the last thing Nellie's broken with her climbing and meddlesome hands that are never out of mischief. She's more trouble than fifteen children, and I wish you'd find her another home before everything in mine is smashed to smithereens!"

Merry, dimpled, dancing, playful Nellie a trouble? Roy's lip quivered with mingled indignation and grief. "I'm sorry, very sorry," he answered. "Little sister never meant to vex you. It was an accident. And I'll save up the price of the vase——"

"A whole week's wages wouldn't buy back the like of it," interrupted Mrs. Maguire.

The poor creature had a hasty temper, but when Roy *had* saved a week's wages and offered her the sum, she waved him wildly away with her apron, whose corner eventually found it's way to her eyes.

"No, bless you, child, I was only angry," she explained. "Why, I'd cut off my hands and then my head before I'd touch that money. No, bless you. The dear child might break everything she wanted to and welcome. I'd be so glad to have her back. But I do think in love and justice her own kind grandmother ought to have had the comfort of her and not just a stranger like me. And then, Roy, the country's so much healthier for children!"

Roy's first journey to the country had not been a long one—starting in the morning and back at lamplight—and a kind friend there to speed the going. Father Brady would have accompanied him (visibly), but that he considered self-reliance one of the best virtues to inculcate in a boy. "Spiritually and physically we often stumble and fall where there's no one to help us up," he used to say. "We must learn early to whittle our own walking sticks and carve our own crutches for use when the need comes."

"Now, here are your tickets," ensconcing Roy and Nellie in a comfortable seat, and throwing open the window to admit the air and sunshine of a lovely April Day. "When the Conductor comes through, give them to him. I've told him to watch over you. Ask for the stationmaster at Storyville, and tell him where you want to go. He'll see that you find the way, and I'll be——Now you're all right. Good-bye, Nellie, be a good baby. Good-bye, Roy, my lad, God bless you," and with a strong hand-clasp Father Brady passed out upon the platform.

For a long while Nellie busied herself watching the flying landscape and prattling merrily. But towards afternoon she grew serious, solemn, cross, like all tired children, and the pale boy whom the Conductor so kindly helped off at the journey's end carried in his arms a little girl fast, fast asleep.

The station at Storyville is not attractive architecturally or otherwise, but there's a telegraph office at the end of the waiting-room, and, as Roy entered it, the man at the table rose and advanced towards him. "What's your name, my boy?" he asked, drawing a telegram from his pocket and glancing at it.

"Roy Ergood, Sir, and I want to find Mrs. Page's place, Mrs. Ellen Page. It's a little cottage, with a garden all around it near the creek. Would you please tell me which is the nearest way to it?"

"The nearest and easiest way is to ride," replied the station-master, smiling. "Come, your carriage is waiting," and, turning, he led Roy out by the opposite door.

And there stood a two-horse wagon with a canvas cover.

"Here's the boy that's to go to Mrs. Page's and back," he called to the old farmer on the seat. "It was mighty obliging in you to come, but there ain't anyone in Storyville more obliging. When I got the telegram ordering a team to be in waiting, you were the first man I thought of, Father Brady will see to the money part——"

"There's nothin' to pay, nothin' to pay," exclaimed Joe Burton, warmly. "What's a horse and wagon good for if it ain't to fetch and carry them that wants to ride? Hand me up the little one till you climb in, Sir. No, I won't wake her. I reckon she'd keep right along dreamin' with a cannon for a pillar."

As they jolted along Roy noted eagerly the white-painted cottages of the pretty village his

mother had so often described to him—the shining silver river and the “sleeping kings” of mountains in the distance. “Who lives there?” he asked, as they passed “The Pines.” “That’s the old Colonel’s place,” returned Burton. “Same name as you—Colonel Ergood”—with a glance at the boy’s profile. “Might be kinder kin of yours. Might be your grandfather.”

“My grandfather has gone away to Ireland,” said Roy coldly. “He hasn’t come back yet. Mamma never told me I had any other relatives in the world.”

“’Taint for me to meddle in other folkses business,” soliloquized Burton, “but I reckon I can think what I think without speakin’ it. Here’s where you want to stop at,” he said finally, and, as before, he held Nellie in his tender arms while Roy sprang out. “I’ll mind your hat for you, now, you’re ready. You can go ’round to the side door,” he added, “if you don’t want to see Mrs. Page. She’s been right poorly here of late. You’ll find Pete in the garden weedin’ or Dinah on the back porch.”

“Good Lord,” exclaimed the old negress aloud, as Roy came swiftly up the porch steps. “Hush,” he commanded; “hush, don’t wake her, please, or she’ll cry before I can leave her.”

Then, pressing a light kiss on the sleeping child's curl-thatched forehead, he laid her in wondering Dinah's instinctively extended arms.

"Tell Mrs. Page, it's her daughter's little girl," he whispered. "Her whole name is 'Ellen Page McPherson,' and there are some letters and things in this bag to give, too. My Mamma fixed them for her. Nellie's been with us ever since her own mother died up in the city. We loved her and she loved us, but we couldn't keep her any longer. Tell Mrs. Page to be good to her and to make everybody else good to her—and she likes bread and milk every night for supper——"

"De Lord hab mercy," faltered Dinah, standing as one transfixed, while Roy turned and fled as if pursued.

When Nellie opened her eyes and looked into strange faces she began to cry wildly for "Woy—Woy, me want my Woy!" But it would have been a most unnatural child that did not at last lie quiet and comforted on a grandmother's bosom, deluged with kisses, blessings, tears.

Roy's ride back to the station was made in silence, though his companion was one of the most talkative of men.

"I just couldn't have said the right word to save me," declared Joe Burton afterwards. "Folks often has things put away that they'd rather the children wouldn't find out; but it most pulled my heart to pieces the way the poor boy looked. I was mighty thankful when we come in sight of the station and found a priest standin' there on the platform, sorter watchin' out for us. And the lad sets up pantin'-like when he seen him, and as soon as the wagon stops he just leapt down and clear forgets his hat, though he remembered to say 'thank you' so civil-like when I calls it after him. And then he runs up to that priest and cries out, sobbin'-like, 'O Father Brady, Father—you—you—*here?*'"

It was powerful curious his bein' there so handy-like he come apurpose, but it ain't for me to meddle in other folkses business. I can think what I think without speakin' it."

"Why I simply made the trip invisibly to you," said the good Father, throwing his arm about Roy as he took the seat beside him. "I rode in the next car and hid in the depot. You see, I thought you'd do better without me *going*, but for the *coming back*, alone, in the dark (see how bright those stars are up there), why I meant to travel with you. It's a lovely

place, Storyville, isn't it? Nellie will be very happy there, and next summer we'll go down to see her. I told Mrs. Maguire not to expect you home tonight. You're going to be my guest at the parsonage, and tomorrow up early and back to work, little man, that mamma *was* and *is* so proud of, back to work like a Trojan."

CHAPTER XIV.

A FORTUNATE ENCOUNTER.

*"Wait for the day is breaking,
Though the dark night be long."*

Dr. Wingfield blended business with pleasure in his trip to Europe that summer. After reading a splendid paper on the "Eye and Ear" before the Medical Congress at Berlin, to which he was a delegate, he ran away from the universal notice it attracted, skimmed across the Continent and plunged into the heart of Ireland, where, as he declared, "he wasn't likely to know anyone or be known, but could take long walks in country lanes and shoot with his camera at everything that pleased him."

He was returning to his inn from a delightful ramble one August evening when, passing a tiny, ivy-mantled chapel perched on the green hill overlooking the ruins of Glenmore Castle, he saw an old man sitting on the steps whose face and striking figure were familiar to him. Tim—Tim—the Colonel's gardener—looking straight upward, but seeing nothing—a blind old man in tattered raiment.

"Tim!" he exclaimed, stopping before him; "Tim O'Connor, can this be *you*? How came you over here?"

"It's a friend's voice, and kindly. Would you be tellin' me who it is?" responded Tim.

"Dr. Wingfield, Surgeon Company B, Cavalry, of which you were one of the bravest soldiers."

"Dr. Wingfield?" cried Tim, tremulously. "It's proud I am to feel your hand on mine, Sir. You mind the time when you saved my life with that big wound in my side that I got at Manassas?"

Then, clasping the Doctor's hand in both of his: "You're only passin' through for pleasure, I'm supposin', and you'll be goin' back to America?"

"Yes, I'm on my summer holiday. I return home in two weeks."

"Then, Doctor," pleaded Tim, "if you should ever see my Kathie—she that's Mrs. Ergood now—or her blessed boy, promise me in the name of all you love you'll never be tellin' them that you saw me here like this. I felt the darkness settlin' down for a long while. The flowers would be losin' their colors till I didn't know one from the other, but I *could* see plainly that soon I couldn't be workin' any

more. So tellin' them I'd take a holiday, I came over here, but unless I got better I niver meant to go back. Sure, would I be livin' on them—a poor blind burden? Kathie was always savin', and marryin' the Colonel's son and bein' left a widow didn't make her the less so. I'd enough laid by in the bank for the two to be comfortable without me, and so I let them be thinkin' me dead these years. If it's a sin, why God in His mercy forgive me! It's little one like me is needin'. My cousin has given me the bit and the sup for what I can help keepin' the children quiet whilst she's out and on pleasant days they bring me here and lave me to sit in the sun on the very spot where I first met my Kathie's mother. The Lord's promises are sweet to those that suffer. But, oh, Doctor, sometimes the longin' to see those two again is more than I can bear."

"Tim," said the Doctor, adjusting his glasses. "Stand up, my man, and let me look at your eyes."

CHAPTER XV.

OLE MASSA, WANT A FLOWER?

"Life is a sheet of paper white,
On which each one of us may write,
His word or two, and then comes night."

The day after the news of Roy Ergood's death reached Storyville the children, as they came out found the Colonel's old nurse, black Blanche, sitting on the school-house steps crying bitterly.

"Chillun," she wailed, rocking herself to and fro, "Chillun, yo' feets ain't muddy an' yo' gowns ain't dragged wid de worl's sin and sorrer, yo' kin go clost to de Throne whar God kin hear yo'. Pray for ole Massa. His coat are buttoned up cl'ar to de chin, but his heart's a-bleedin' underneaf. Young Marse Roy—he dead. O Lord, O Lord, he dead, and ole Marse certainly did lub him, he certainly did lub dat boy. I done nuss ole Marse on dis breas' when he a little sof' baby, and I done nuss Marse Page dere, too. *He* die forgivin all, but Marse Henry he gwine die a-lookin straight before him 'stead ob lookin' up. O Lord,

maybe some little chile mought take his han' and lead him froo de gate.

Ise heah to ax yo' chillun don' run 'way from him no more; he ain't nebber hurted yo' an' he ain't nebber gwine ter. He ole now and lonely, an' he sick an' sore in his soul. Pray for ole Marse, chillun, pray for him!"

"No," said a little leader of the children troop. "The old Colonel never *did* hurt us, and we're real sorry for him, ain't we? Let's pray for him." * * * *

"The Colonel's certainly been softening ever since the day old "Loo" died and he give her that military funeral and fired a gun over her grave with his own hand," said some of Storyville's many tongues. "He sometimes looks at a body as he didn't used to—now he's walking on the ground on a level with us. Well, living there all alone by himself in his big house, he's naturally got to thinking and thinking, and you can't help feeling sorry for them that lays up thorny thoughts and remembrances for their old age instead of sweet and pleasant ones."

The first time that the Colonel followed the creek in one of his long, solitary summer evening walks, and came homeward by the Page cottage, Nellie and old Dinah were in its gar-

den. The tall, advancing figure at once attracted the child's notice. "Who is dat?" she demanded, designating the passing object of her curiosity with a gesture of her tiny hand.

"Hush, chile, hush," whispered Dinah. "He ain't nebber pass dis house befo'. Dat's ole Massa."

"Ole Massa?" repeated Nellie. "Ole Massa?—what a funny name!"

"Chile, for de Lord's sake, hush," pleaded Dinah. "Don't let him hear yo'. Ise 'fraid to deff ob him."

The child lifted her great black eyes with a startled look. "Do he bite?" she asked.

"N—o, go 'way, chile, no!"

"Den," said Nellie, smiling, with a characteristic toss of her raven curls, "Den *me* ain't 'fraid of him!"

So a few days later alone in the garden singing merrily to herself while gathering a bouquet for "Grandma" from the heart-shaped bed of white and purple violets, Nellie looked up just in time to see the Colonel coming down the road.

"Why bess me, dere he is again," she remarked delightedly—and running to the gate—"Ole Massa," she asked, "Ole Massa, want a flower?"—holding them out to him.

The Colonel stared at her in astonishment, and, not understanding what she said, was passing on, when, her face flushing with anger and her forehead contracting in a frown, Nellie flung the flowers across his path. "You bad man," she cried fiercely, "You's bad man—I don't like you, but I ain't 'fraid of you," and, turning, she flew on the wings of fear into the house.

Then the *gentleman* understood. Raising his hat and bowing towards the cottage, he gathered up some of the scattered flowers and drew their stems through his buttonhole. There was no one in sight—only the white curtains of the window beside which the invalid, Mrs. Page, daily sat, stirred slightly. It might have been a breath of wind—it might have been a sigh. And on the night of her death she sent old Pete for the Colonel.

Every one loved Mrs. Page, the soft-voiced, silver-haired born lady, who had kissed with smiling lips every cross that came to her; the gentle helpmeet of her ruined husband proudly sharing his altered lot, she, who "befo' the war had never even tied her own shoe." So all Storyville followed her to the grave, marveling to see the Colonel there as chief mourner and marveling still when next day they found

the cottage empty—all its belongings with Baby Nellie, Pete and Dinah transferred to "The Pines."

"And, oh, Miss Milly," said Dinah: "Thank de Lord, we's back at de ole place agin. Marse Henry ain't like he used to be nohow, and de way dat little gal chile do rule him a'ready, it certainly am grand. Ya'as, indeed," remarked old Dinah, with a wise shake of her scarlet 'kerchiefed head, "De pore Colonel's heart's been froze ober so long I knowed if eber de summer did tech it, dar'd be right smart of a freshet."

CHAPTER XVI.

THE DOCTOR AND A KIND NURSE.

*"O joy it is, when we our mission find,
E'en if it be to dry the humb est tear,
Or still the very faintest human fear."*

"Where is Roy?" asked Mr. Lawrence, entering his office one morning and, for the first time, not finding the boy there.

"He's sick, Sir," responded a clerk. "He sent up word early that he's sure to be better tomorrow."

"Ah," said the kindest of employers, "Poor little fellow, I'll see after him when I go to lunch."

"Yes, Sir, he's right sick," answered Mrs. Maguire, leading the way up-stairs. "He tried to dress and go out this morning, but his head spun like a top, he said, and I made him get back into bed. There's a fever come on now, and he falls out of his head at times, calling for his Mamma and little sister and Gran'pa. It's awfully sad, and Father Brady that was such a good friend of his is over in Rome on the first vacation he's taken in ten years. If Roy don't

get better I'm going to send for the Doctor to-night."

"Roy, my lad, don't you know me?" The genial old bachelor lawyer bent over the flushed face on the pillow. Roy stirred without opening his eyes. "I'll be better in the morning," he murmured. "Tell Mr. Lawrence I'll be there early. O Mamma, Mamma, take me up tight in your arms and make the headache stop."

"Mrs. Maguire," commanded Lawrence in leaving, "Do everything for him that love or money can do and send the bill to me. He's one of the sort this world can't afford to lose as boy or man, and I know *I* an't. I'm going now to send him my Doctor, the best in the city."

A half hour later Dr. Wingfield was at Roy's bedside. "Roy Ergood," he exclaimed. "Ah, my brave old Tim, at last the lost is found. Drive to Miss Goldweight's now, James," he commanded, springing into his carriage. "The large marble house on the corner, facing Evergreen Square," and drawing from his pocket a note he had received a few days previous, he read it over.

"Dear Doctor Wingfield:—

"I am back at last in the Washington house, to remain. The New York home, on my return from Europe I deeded to St. John's parish to be converted into an orphanage in memory of poor, dear mamma. You are in a position to see and hear of much suffering that money could relieve—please come to me, or for me, any hour of the day, or night, when you think I can be of any use. You don't know how much good I want to do—Tupper says "happiness is a roadside flower, growing on the highway of usefulness.

"Hoping soon to see you, believe me ever,

"ALICE GOLDWEIGHT."

"Yes," said Dr. Wingfield, helping Alice with her cloak, "It reads as you say, like a story, but the longer we live the more wonderful must appear the 'ways of Providence.'"

Alice came swiftly across the floor, and, kneeling by the bed, laid her cool, soft hand on Roy's hot forehead. "Dear," she said, as he gazed wonderingly up at her (the delirium had passed). "The Doctor sent me to nurse you. I knew your father and mother once, and I hope you'll try to love me a little. I'm Miss Alice, or just Alice, Sister Alice, if you like. As soon as you are better we'll go away in a nice warm carriage, away from this little room, to a great,

big, pretty house, and you shall——” she paused, seeing he wished to speak.

“You knew my Mamma once?” he whispered.

“Yes, when we were both young girls, and her eyes were just like yours.”

He reached under the pillow and drew forth a photograph, pressing it to his lips before handing it to her.

“That’s Mamma, when she was a girl,” he said, “but she was a whole world more beautiful when she was my Mamma. I wanted her to have a new picture taken that would hang up, and she meant to just before she got sick.” His voice began to tremble pitifully. “That’s all I have left of Mamma now except that trunk over there with her dresses in it, and Grandpa hasn’t come home yet—and——”

Alice slipped the picture into its place, and, lifting Roy’s head upon her shoulder, she laid her cheek against his and kissed him.

“You feel like Mamma,” he cried, suddenly flinging both arms around her. “It’s the first time anybody held me this way—since—since——” and he fell a-weeping to break his heart.

“Hush, darling, hush,” murmured Alice, “Don’t cry, it will make you worse, Roy.”

"No," sobbed the boy at last, "I'm better, Miss Alice; I'll be able to go to work tomorrow."

"You'll never have to go to work any more," she answered, wiping away his tears with her black-bordered handkerchief, "You're Doctor Wingfield's boy now, dear, and mine."

CHAPTER XVII.

PSALM AND ANTHEM.

"Without the smile of God upon the soul,
We see not : * * * But a ray
Upon this darkness suddenly may start,
And Christ's dear love be poured into the heart."

"Happy he who finds even the shadow of a true friend to walk beside him in this world." The friendship that existed between Alice Goldweight and Ida Burleigh outlasted time and separation. Never, since the first Christmas after meeting, when Aunt Milly had received her "black shawl," Jim Burton the "new school books," never had the day passed without bringing a box of remembrances "from Alice, with love." And her life—the inner and the outer life—was written in the letters that filled an upper drawer of Ida's bureau.

Now she would be describing a great ball or party, "tired as could be, but not going to bed till Ida had been told all about it." Then, after several seasons in Washington came the trip to Europe—longer and longer letters postmarked Paris, London, Berlin—new scenes, new acquaintances, sandy-haired Lord Erskine, with

his amusing lisp and drawl young Count Cherchedot, her mother's favorite, but whom Alice nicknamed "Doctor Fell," for the well-known reason that she did not love him. But the brightest hues of Alice's character shone forth in the shadow when a sudden illness had changed Mrs. Goldweight from a frivolous pleasure-seeker into a helpless invalid, self-centered and complaining, now at Ems, now at Vichy, now in Southern Italy, seeking only health.

"I refused three offers of marriage in as many months," Alice wrote, "much to Mamma's chagrin. Indeed, she was very angry, but what could I do? They did not love me; it was only the money they wanted. I do them no injustice. 'Dr. Fell' was frank enough to confess it to me, in parting. 'You have break me the heart, Mademoiselle,' said he, 'without that you marry me I fear I remain ever—poor'—he did not say 'single.'"

Henceforth I shall devote myself to poor Mamma. Sometime, maybe, she will see that she needed me most. Pain is such a trial to her; if she would only be patient.—I endeavor to be for her. I'm afraid I can't make as many 'Thanksgiving Days for those around me as I meant to that summer morning at 'Cherrydale'

reading the little book you lent me—do you remember, dear?—But I never pass a beggar—and there are oceans of them over here—without finding them something in my purse.”

Then came a morning that Ida read again and again the very gladdest of Alice's letters, full of wondrous, gladdening news. Tomorrow, tomorrow, she and the orphaned Roy would be “coming home to Cherrydale.”

* * *

“’Deed, Miss Milly,” said Monica, “de ole house jus’ seem like it creakin’ under so much gladness. I spect dis Christmas comin’ goin’ to be de merries’ we ebber did see, specially if dat blessed young Marse Roy stays on wid us all. Miss Ida, she jus’ lives by lookin’ at him, seems like. But he certainly does favor his Pa.”

The novelty of country lanes and white-painted cottages charmed the city lad. He took the silver-backed river and the mountains to his heart, and delighted in long walks through the woods that lay behind the deserted Page house. Bearing branches of bright colored autumn leaves for every one at “Cherrydale,” not even forgetting old Monica, he would usually come home by “The Pines,” slowing his step as he passed the great, closed gate, and looking

wistfully in through the iron bars. Confiding to Alice every incident of his short life, he had mentioned often his first visit to Storyville. His inquiries for "Nellie" had been answered with the information that Mrs. Page was dead now and Baby "Nellie" adopted by a distant relative, Colonel Ergood. If the similarity of their names struck the child, he gave no sign, and Alice, as Doctor Wingfield advised, left everything to "time." So on that afternoon, at the bend of the road, Colonel Ergood and his grandson met, the boy steadily returning the steady look fixed upon him, and, lifting his cap with a graceful bow as the Colonel stopped before him, asking: "What—what is your name, Sir?"

"Roy Ergood," replied the boy. "It was my Papa's name, too."

"And mine also," said the Colonel. "A fine name—I hope you'll do it honor."

"I intend to, Sir," answered Roy. "I intend to be a good man. Grandpa used to say that was the first thing to try for, because that depends on oneself. And the next thing I intend to be, is a soldier."

(A pause.)

"Were you ever here before?"

"Yes, Sir—once; I came to bring little Nellie home to her grandmother, Mrs. Page. They tell me she lives with you now; that you are very good to her, and that she's well and happy."

So the Colonel had found Nellie's often called-for "Woy."

"I'm glad to have met you, Sir," said he, holding out his hand. "Come, and see her—and—me at 'The Pines.' And come soon. I want to see *you*."

When Roy returned from his visit to "The Pines" he was in a state of wild excitement.

"Miss Alice," he cried, "the Colonel says he's my own grandfather. And Nellie knew me. She ran to meet me, and she was beautiful as a fairy, all in white and blue ribbons. And then the Colonel took me over the house—a great, big, dark old house, full of rooms and rooms, and, when we got up in the tower, he unlocked a door, and we went into a round room. You could see the mountains from the window, and he took my hand tight and said that was where my father lived when he was a boy, and asked me wouldn't I like to stay with Nellie and him always and call him 'Grandpa?' And I was frightened a little and I told him I never had known but one Grandpa, the best ever a boy

had, and he was away in Ireland now, and it would seem so strange to call anyone by his name. He looked sorry, but said: 'As you please, as you please.' And then I asked if I might come and tell you everything, Miss Alice, because I was Doctor Wingfield's boy now and yours, and he said 'Yes, go, go, but—come back soon, soon.' ”

Four days later came the Colonel's first Thanksgiving dinner, with Miss Alice, Miss Milly, Ida and Master Roy as his guests. "And two others I hoped to have welcomed here to-day," said he, "Doctor Wingfield and Father Brady, to both of whom I am indebted for kindnesses to Master Roy—indebted beyond the power of repayment." The clear cut face gave evidence of intense emotion. He paused. Roy sprang up, and, hastening 'round to his chair, laid his boy-cheek against the man's furrowed one.

"Grandpa, dear Grandpa," he whispered, "I've just thought it out. Hereafter you'll be always 'Grandpa Henry' and my other one that's away he'll be Grandpa Tim." All this while Nellie had been looking jealously on with a gathering frown.

"Zat's enough, zat's enough!" she called, imperiously, beating with her tumbler on the table to attract attention. "Uncle Henry, you dwinks my healf and Grandma's evvy day at dinner. What's the matter you hasn't doned it yet to-day?"

"I beg your pardon, dear," said the Colonel, starting. "I had not forgotten, only deferred it."

Whereupon, filling all their glasses with Apollinaris water, he rose, and, bowing low towards her and his guests—"To the honored memory of Ellen Page, most perfect of women," he said, softly, "and to little Lady Nellie, her granddaughter and namesake." Standing with inclined head, he touched the glass to his lips. Then, suddenly looking upwards, "And on this day I will propose another toast: To the memory of Nellie's grandfather, my friend and once enemy, Edward Fitzhugh Page, brave champion of a cause he deemed the right one, yet happier in defeat than I was in victory, for losing what I won, he won what I lost."

CHAPTER XVIII.

REUNION.

"At evening time it shall be light."

"Now, Tim," said Doctor Wingfield, as they stepped from the train at Storyville, "We'll first pay our respects to Miss Milly and Miss Alice, and I'll leave you at 'Cherrydale' while I run over and say a word to the Colonel."

"Yes, Sir," answered Tim, looking eagerly about him and striving to restrain gathering tears at sight of the old familiar scenes. But they overflowed when he felt his hand clasped in those of Miss Alice. "Ah, Miss, you always had the kind heart," sobbed the humble old man. "Are you mindin' that day you gave me the money to bury in the Burton orchard? But, sure, I never thought to hear you speakin' such words of gladness for my recovery. If I could be tellin' you what it is to see again after the long night—I could fall on my knees every time I look at the blessed Doctor here that——"

"No, Tim," interrupted the Doctor, turning back. "I found you in exile and brought you

home with me—that was all. There are some in my profession who arrogate to their own skill the cures they may accomplish. I pity their delusion. A physician is but an instrument in the hand of Him who fashioned the soul and the body, who knows the needs and maladies of both, and who, if He so choose, can make both well. ‘Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but unto Thy name give all the glory.’ I repeat those words each time I undertake a case.”

“Ah, the good man—the Saint,” faltered Tim, as Dr. Wingfield hastened away. “Sure, now he’s *gone*, I’ll be tellin’ you how he nursed me under his own roof with the servants to serve me, and sayin’ ivery night: “Be patient now. We may find them tomorrow.’ And it’ll be just a fortnight come Tuesday, the mornin’ he took the bandages off, and I could see as plain as ever, that he lays his hand on my shoulder, and says he: ‘Tim, my man, my good Tim, your daughter, poor Katie, is dead, says he—but the boy—the boy is safe with friends, and you’ll be seein’ him soon.’ So I’m waitin’ as patient as I can, for I must not be murmurin’. Sure, even the Colonel has been writin’ to bid me back to ‘The Pines,’ and it’s this same day I’ll be goin’ there.”

When Tim beheld the old Colonel waiting his approach on the veranda in the mellow light of the glorious December afternoon, he straightened himself to his full height and gave the old-time military salute. But the Colonel stepped down with extended hand.

"Tim," said he, "how are you? I'm glad to see you. You will find nothing changed here but me. I said many unkind words to you when we parted. I apologize for them now and welcome you back to your old home, Tim—but not to your old place"——

There was a merry tinkling of silver bells just then, and Roy, playing "horse" in gorgeous harness, the reins held by Nellie, came racing gayly around the corner of the house—a beautiful boy in black velvet and lace, rosy-cheeked, bright-eyed——

"Grandpa—O Grandpa—Grandpa *Tim!*"

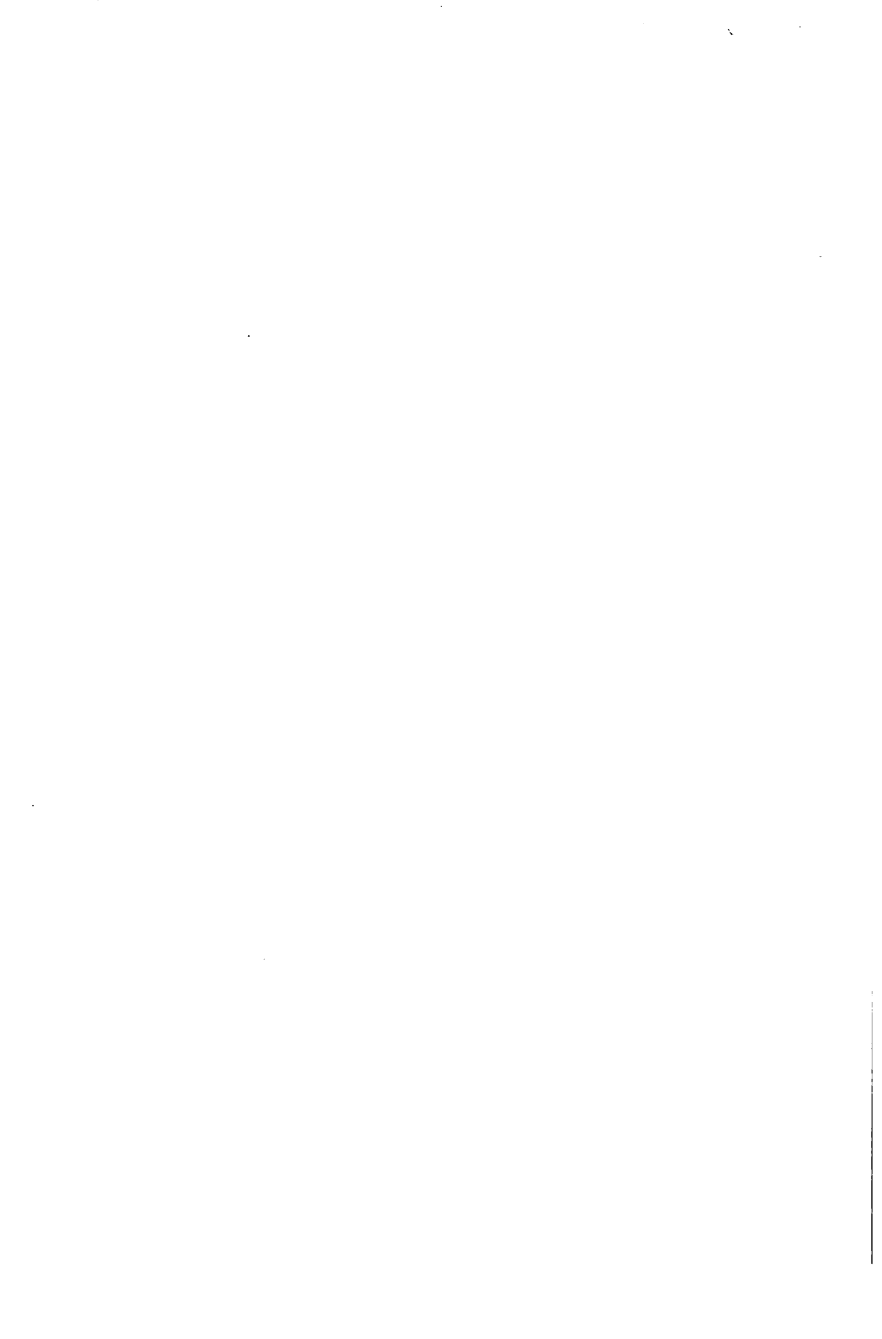
"My son's boy and your daughter's, Tim," said the Colonel, with a graceful gesture as of introduction, and, turning, "Grandpa Henry" entered the house with Nellie in his arms, leaving Roy and "Grandpa Tim" clasped in one another's. * * * * *

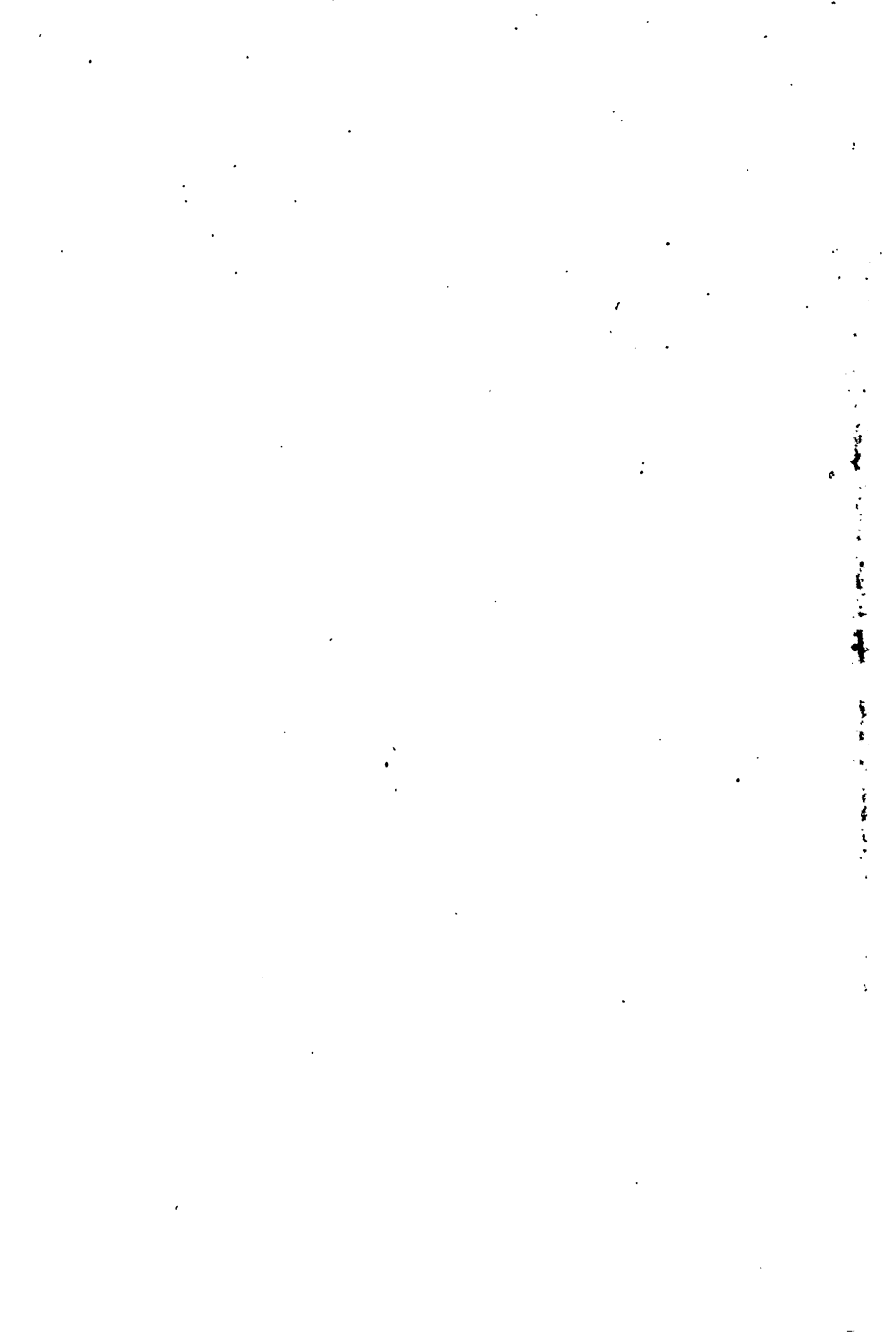
The white and purple lilacs that border the curving driveway of "The Pines" are all abloom now. Soft falls through their fragrant, over-

hanging branches, tangled light and shadow on those who walk beneath. Tim *will* busy himself about the garden, and he has designed a rustic arbor on the Southern lawn built of white, climbing roses within which the master of "The Pines" can sit and watch Roy and Nellie playing, or studying—"Grandpa Henry" as described by "Grandpa Tim," always the illigant-soldier and born gentleman, become the still more illigant-Christian." For no longer the fierce Commander of cavalry, dashing to the front with flashing sword drawn, brother against brother, but a man of peace is Colonel Ergood now—a man of peace, and *at* peace, who has—surrendered even his side arms, but not before having won that most glorious of victories—the victory over himself.

In his fine dark eye glows a soft kindliness, and goodwill to all—children love him, and cling trustingly to his hand, for he has himself become "like unto a little child."







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